

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 7

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 54:27)

In your life now, for example, how the light reflects off this table, you begin to see that there's usually only people who take acid would appreciate that. But you don't, there's no need for that, because it's actually, all that acid does, it intensifies your sense perceptions as far as I can tell by the very limited experience of taking it once. It intensifies your sense perceptions, and your sense perceptions become so intense that there's not much room for thinking and conceptualization.

And therefore, sometimes people go around and say, wow, wow, wow, and they're not thinking, they're just perceiving. So the advantage is that it has eliminated your stream of thinking, and then for some people that is so revolutionary that they think it's the greatest thing that ever happened to them. And all it did was that it made sense perception shout so loud that there's nothing else but perceiving.

You get bombarded, it's almost violent, you get bombarded with sense perception, smell, hearing, seeing, oh, wow. But you haven't, there has been no increase in consciousness, no intensification of presence, it's just you have turned up the volume of the things around you, everything is shouting at you, visually shouting, even the smells become, you can even smell a glass of water, especially if coffee has chlorine in it, but even without it, even without it you can smell, I did that, smelled, oh. But the fact is there is, it is miraculous what surrounds you at any given moment, at any moment now, what surrounds you even from just the perspective of the surface reality of sense perceptions, sounds, sights, is alive and has an inherent beauty to it.

Not just those things that are obviously beautiful like the flowers, they are just wonderful, yes, but even things that would not be normally called beautiful, that's why I talked about the reflection of the light of the table or the carpet, and even artificial light, it's light, there's a beauty to it that one wouldn't normally see unless you become really present and then you acknowledge all that surround as just wonderful, you become, you honor everything and you see the beauty that is actually there in everything.

Some artists, this, I don't know when it started in the history of art when they no longer depicted important, so-called important subject matters like important people, portraits of important people or of huge buildings, paintings of buildings or religious figures that they painted. At some point in the history of art, some painters started painting seemingly insignificant things, a bowl of fruit or just one fruit on the table or a landscape that is not spectacularly beautiful. There are many of the French, maybe I think they're called impressionists, they have wonderful landscapes, but not the landscape that shouts at you and says, look, I'm grandiose, gigantic, waterfall and rocks and so on, that is fine too, but that's like taking acid and the landscape shouts at you and says, look how

beautiful I am.

But some painters then started to paint seemingly unremarkable landscapes and saw, because they saw, even in the seemingly unremarkable, they saw intense beauty and aliveness. And in that sense, if we contemplate those paintings, it can teach us to be more aware of the aliveness and beauty in the seemingly ordinary because it's there. So those artists must have seen that, must have been present enough to see and just totally ordinary, there's a little hedge, there's a tree, there's a field, nobody would look at that twice.

And they sat and started, first they saw it, presence, wow, and then they started, and some of that perception through presence is still there in the painting. And people, even people who are not very present, can obscurely can sense that this painting has something, they don't know what it is, but it has something. And the multimillionaire can say, can't feel, okay, I'll pay 25 million for that.

But of course he could just go, he could just go into any landscape and stand or sit there and contemplate, it's free. And so this, the practice of abundance, this is, it's seemingly, what I'm talking about is seemingly not connected with abundance, but it is. To see the beauty that is around you is a form of abundance, it's abundant life around you.

And if you don't honor that, if you're unhappy with, you pay no attention to it, you do not honor what surrounds you here and now and say, I want something else. If you don't see the beauty in your little cabin, but because you want the mansion in Beverly Hills, then there's this gap. You're trying to manifest through a sense of lack and incompleteness.

You're trying to manifest abundance when you don't feel abundance. Now, if you work extremely hard and maybe you'll even get there, probably you won't, but maybe you will make enough money and finally you have a mansion, it won't help you because when you finally sit in your mansion, you will be the same as you were in your cabin, not being able to honor the present moment. And the same dissatisfaction will surface again and you will be very surprised and say, well, how can that be that I'm still unhappy?

I was unhappy in the cabin, I'm unhappy here. Not the first few weeks or months that you are there, but after that, when the egoic delusion goes and the story you're spinning around in me and my achievement, suddenly you can be unhappy again. Well, of course you didn't appreciate.

Now, if you're in your cabin, let's say cabin or whatever, or maybe it's not even a cabin, it's a tent, and you're complaining in your mind about how dreadful it is to have to live in a cabin, little cabin or a tent at your age, still having not made it yet, or the various ways in which people have interfered with you, what you wanted prevented you from achieving what you could have achieved if it only hadn't been for this ex-wife or husband. And if your parents had been more conscious and helped you to get whatever

better education or hadn't messed up your life with their negativity, maybe then something could have happened, complaining about, I don't want to be here, it's awful. You don't see the light shining off the table, you don't see even the flowers, you don't really appreciate nothing.

So that's a state of non-abundance, and most likely you will continue to experience non-abundance in various other forms, non-abundance, and even if you achieve the mansion, as I said, you will still basically have it be in the same state. And what is the alternative? The alternative is to appreciate the beauty of the cabin or the tent or what surrounds you, the little things.

But to do that, you need to be alert. Without the alertness, all you have is the mind giving its judgments and say, why do I have to sit in this old chair? It can't afford anything else but this old chair, dreadful.

It's not even not comfortable. I deserve something better. Yeah, you do perhaps, but you haven't honored this chair.

You have to honor the chair first. This chair? And then, of course, as we all know, the painter Van Gogh painted, he must have appreciated his old chair.

There's a famous picture of an old rickety chair and there must have been a lot. Now, he was not present in the rest of his life because he cut off his ear, but he must have been very present while he was painting and looking in that area. He painted this chair because he saw how alive and beautiful it was.

He didn't have judgments about it, it's old or whatever. He also painted a pair of shoes, his own shoes, by the way. I think they're called peasant shoes, but they were actually his own shoes.

He painted a pair of old, worn out shoes and now people, nobody would have bought these shoes or the chair if he had said, give me \$10 for this chair, no way. But now this painting is \$25 million and the same with the shoes. Isn't that amazing?

You wouldn't give any money for the shoes, but for the painting of the shoes, you give millions. And that's because the painting embodies the additional dimension of presence. So you're not really buying a painting of old shoes.

You're buying a piece of presence to the extent that that is possible, that presence can flow into something material. Now, if you don't have enough money to buy one of his paintings, then why not just look more consciously around you? You find similar things everywhere.

Well, your shoes probably won't be as old as his, but it doesn't matter. And your chair won't be as ugly as the mind would have said, an ugly old chair. You will have just an

ordinary chair.

Start with what is around you. Bring intense alertness to the sense perceptions and by doing so, honor the is-ness of each little being. Because even inanimate things are really alive.

Energy fields, the atoms inside are vibrating continuously. They just look inanimate, but you can actually sense the aliveness when you don't conceptualize. So that's the beginning of feeling of gratitude really is for what is here in this moment.

And you don't have to say in your mind, oh, thank you so much. Gratitude can happen without any words. It's just an honoring, an honoring of life.

Life that has taken on form to honor the forms of life that are around you at this moment. And then something emerges that is, you may notice, you feel alive within yourself. You feel a field of alive presence that is the background to the sense perceptions.

And that is presence. So you feel the background to your sense perceptions, which is your very own presence or the presence of God through you, which is the same thing. You feel that presence in the background of all perceptions.

When you listen to the sound of the wind in the trees, sunlight streaming through the window or an artificial light bulb even, light, and everywhere, you have then the two things, the what is in the world of form and the formless that makes all these perceptions possible. And that is, and there you have the source of all abundance, which is consciousness itself, out of which everything arises. And the moment you touch within yourself the source of all abundance, then you can create out of that sense of fullness.

If you then use your mind or allow it, this feeling, to flow into your mind and create what it wants to create, a thought may come to you of what it is that you want to create. And let's say it's a better place to live. Then you can, yes, you can.

What does it feel like, that better place? Let's say you want a mansion. You probably don't need a mansion, but maybe just better than a tent.

You want to be warm. So if you visualize a house on a hill, for example, what does it feel like? What does it feel like to be in that house?

It feels the same fullness that you're experiencing now. That's what it feels like. No different from now.

You're already there and the house is already there. There's no difference in the aliveness that you feel now. You create out of there and you can, if you like, you can see yourself in the house feeling just as alive.

And when you finally, the house comes, then that becomes the reality for you. You have exchanged the tent for the house, but basically, the enjoyment is the same. A little bit of discomfort perhaps may leave you.

If you get from a tent, you move to a house, you don't, it gets warm, you have more heat around you, perhaps a more comfortable chair to sit in, which is nice. That's, maybe you have, when I graduated from, I had a bicycle for many years up to the age of 32. I would ride around on a bicycle and then enjoyed that tremendously.

And one day, my dad arrived in England to our visit and he was shocked that at my age, I was still riding on a bicycle. It never occurred to me. And then, somebody gave me an old car and I enjoyed driving that.

It's just as much, it's more comfortable, but the enjoyment, I loved bicycles, I still do. The enjoyment is the same. Or sitting on a bus, for a while, I used mostly public transport.

I've spent wonderful times sitting on buses, just being present and completely present and looking out. You don't have to concentrate on the traffic. You can just look at everything, all life flowing past you, feels abundant.

But if I'd had a concept in my mind, I was still, let's say, 15 years ago, 12 years ago, bus was my mode of transportation. If I'd had a concept in my mind, you are now 40 something, 50, whatever, 48, whatever, I can't remember. And it said, and you're still on, you haven't made it yet.

You're still traveling on a bus and it could be a source of suffering, a diminished sense of self. Why, at your age, can't you have a car? That's what my mom said.

Any, it doesn't, the fullness is there. whatever the situation is, there is the fullness of life around you. And you can then create, but no longer out of that sense of unhappiness, hoping to whatever you manifest is going to free you of the unhappiness.

No, it's only whatever you create is in the service of the whole, that is one aspect of it. It's in the service of the totality of other humans and the planet and the whole. Those are the things that want to be created through you.

And whatever you create, then is empowered by the totality, the universal consciousness itself, and not a little me that has said, I need this or that to be happy. If you align yourself to what the totality requires, then it is more than likely that abundance will also flow into your life externally because you're already coming from abundance as your primary state. And then there will be some forms of abundance coming into your life.

So abundance is here and now as an inner realization or an inner state. Out of that, you can manifest or the universe manifests through you. So the essential thing to appreciate the seemingly unremarkable in your life.

If you don't appreciate the seemingly insignificant and you're waiting for something significant to happen to you, then you always pursue some idea of what is significant and don't realize that the significant is hiding in the seemingly insignificant. Because even the most interesting life, let's say you are somebody who continuously does important things and continuously travels and so on. Even there, every moment just consists of relatively insignificant things.

Let's say, okay, here comes another trip, I'm catching a plane, I'm traveling first class to Paris tomorrow for three days doing important things there and then I'm coming back. But if you observe, now that looks to some people as that's a very desirable life or you must be, it's great, it's so exciting. If you're not present in every moment, it's not that exciting.

It's just stressful and you have jet lag and very soon you get tired of the champagne that they give you on the plane, you get tired of the caviar and say, no, just give me a glass of water and you're unhappy. And because if you overlook even the significant trip to Paris consists of little moments. The limousine comes to pick you up and then you sit in it, you're going to the airport.

Now, what's your state of consciousness at that moment? It's just, are you present or you can appreciate that. Appreciate every, then you're walking somewhere to the plane and then you're sitting somewhere.

It's not, in itself, every moment is not a big thing. Even when I give a talk, one could say, okay, now you're going to talk to 2,000 people tonight. That's a big, big thing.

I wish some people say, oh, I wish I was doing something like you. Well, it still is just little things. The car comes, takes me to the green room somewhere and then I sit in the room.

And then people come and they say, oh, we can't start yet, there's a delay. Kim says, we need another 10, 15 minutes. There's people are not getting in, there's chaos there, and just sit.

And if I had an idea in my mind that something usually significant is going to happen now, I would become stressed. I have to give a talk. I have to give a talk now, the next moment.

All these people are waiting for me to give a significant talk. No, that would be stressful and it wouldn't be very good, would not be enjoyable. But to appreciate just the room as it is, there's again, there's another table suddenly in the green room and there's a chair I'm sitting on and there's some flowers and usually they put two bananas there.

And a glass of water. And so you just look around, there's just the simplicity of this moment. If you leave that, then you get into some kind of expectation, look anxiously,

looking forward to the next moment, which is very unknowable, completely unknowable, and just stay with what is.

And then finally, you just can take one step at a time and you walk to your chair that's on the stage without any thought. You can't have any thought in your head when you're going to transmit presents for two hours. And then you sit again, there's another chair.

There's always a chair that you sit on somewhere. And there you sit and there's just presents. Again, every moment is relatively insignificant.

And why look for something significant but see the depth that is in all the little things because really your whole life consists of little things put together. Okay, yes, there are such things as weddings. People say, okay, significant.

There was a watch company for a few years, their advertising slogan was significant moments. I don't know what that meant, but then the people were wearing a watch and then they were looking and there was something significant happening around them. Know that it's an amazing thing when you no longer look for that in your life, but see, it's already around you, the depths and the aliveness of everything around you, which can only be recognized by being in touch with your own depths and aliveness.

It is from that place of intense aliveness, spacious presence that you can appreciate the aliveness in all things. And what really happens is it is more than just the sense perception of a chair or the sense perception of the table, the sense perception of the glass of water. Even within the sense perceptions, you can sense that there's more than what you are just perceiving on the surface.

That everything has a presence, an alive presence to it. And that's a wonderful revelation. And you see that everything that surrounds you at any moment has an alive presence to it.

It's all alive. Even the so-called artificial things, because they're still alive, they're still consisting of vibrating energy fields. And that's an amazing, when you can sense that aliveness, it's not so when we talk of beauty and in little things, it's not just that what you see, because behind the seeing, there is the sense of aliveness.

And when you, that's your, and then you see when you are in touch with that within, you can actually almost penetrate into the spaciousness of each object and feel it's alive. Then you don't have to wait for something to happen in your life to feel more alive. You can already, you commune with the aliveness around you.

And that's the practice then to bring, it eliminates that unsatisfied person that otherwise you carry around with you as your mind identification with that. It eliminates that. And you're there as consciousness perceiving its own creations ultimately, because you are consciousness and every life form has come out of that.

Out of the unmanifested. The Big Bang, they say, is that which started it all. And nobody knows exactly what that means.

Especially nobody knows what was there before the Big Bang. Nothing. The only answer you can give is nothing.

Because if there was something there before, then there was already something created. There was nothing, no thing, just a vast emptiness or fullness, which is the same thing. So there was the one, only the one.

And then the one became the many. The one, they call it explosion, but that's a silly word. And the one started to become form, create form, flow into forms.

And it's still doing it now. The explosion, we are part of the so-called explosion of differentiation of life forms. The outward journey into manifestation.

And yet, that which started it all, the nothingness, the black hole at the center of it all, is still within you as your essence. So the primordial state of the, before the universe came into being, was never lost. Every form has that as its essence within.

And that is the space. Inner space. That is timeless.

That's, out of that, the whole entire universe came. So you are a microcosm of the whole thing. You're a microcosm containing both the formless essence of all things and also embodying the form, the temporary form.

Now, to be conscious of the formless essence is an amazing thing. That's a miracle. The universe, through you, right now, amazing miracle.

The universe through you, right now, is becoming conscious of itself, not just of what it has created, but of its own essence. When you become conscious of yourself, the universe becomes conscious of itself. Isn't that wonderful?

So in that sense, there's an evolutionary process at work in the universe. In another sense, of course, there is a timeless at the heart of all things. It's almost, it's like a contradiction, but at the heart of all things, there's a timeless, formless.

And in the, it looks out here as if there's an evolution. So create, if you feel called upon to create, open yourself to see what it is that wants to come into manifestation through this form. Not what I want to create, the little I.

What is it that wants to happen through me? And then just wait. If you don't know yet, just wait.

Time may pass on the surface reality where time seems to apply. In the meantime, bring presence in. Presence, grow in presence power.

Presence power accumulates, and it could be some years and nothing is happening. It's possible. And suddenly, something happens.

Suddenly, something manifests through you. People sometimes almost complain and say, okay, I've been practicing presence for a year now, and nothing has changed in my life. Well, maybe you haven't been practicing quite as much as you think you have.

If you're complaining that nothing has changed in your life, don't underestimate the power that is in presence. And even if seemingly nothing much is happening yet, there's enormous power that comes through you and flows into this world and flows into your body and through you. And you don't even try to understand what it wants.

You don't even try to understand what it wants to do. No, you can only ever get glimpses of what its ultimate purpose is. There's no single human being who knows intellectually what the ultimate purpose of that vast power is that wants to come into this world through you.

You don't need to. The human mind could not possibly. It would be absurd to even try to understand it.

But you can align yourself with the power because you ultimately are it. It is the one power there is, the one consciousness. It is, that's all there is.

It is the one. And from the point of view of the timeless one, yes, one could say the whole world of form is a kind of dream. One could say that.

Because just as a dream evaporates very quickly, everything that appears, every situation and every human dissolves fairly quickly here. And in that sense, one can speak of it as a kind of dream. When you're in the midst of it, it looks real.

But when you see closely, you realize every form is short-lived and fleeting. And that's fine. And then the forms become, you realize it is a kind of playful thing, form.

The universe wants to play this. And then you start playing it too. It's no longer dreadfully serious.

You start playing, you can manifest forms. And even nice forms and helpful forms, beautiful. The dream becomes much more pleasant.

And you know there is an awake part from where you can watch the dream, knowing it's a dream, a kind of dream. When you think that's all there is, these forms, you have to hang on to them. Oh, it's fearful.

It's, they're all short-lived. And that contemplation itself is liberating. To contemplate the short-lived nature of all forms is liberating because then the forms of life won't assume an importance that they don't have.

But you appreciate, what you really appreciate when you appreciate the world of form is you appreciate that which animates each form. The one. So really that what it comes down to, it's God.

Whatever, wherever you look, it's God appearing as this, that, that. And what you really love and appreciate in each form is the divine formless out of which each form comes. But to be able to sense that, you have to sense it in yourself first.

And that seeing, that is seeing the beauty in everything. That's really what it means. And that seeing the world without a sense of separation, not me and the rest of the universe, which is the egoic state.

Here's me, and there's the rest of the world. And somehow you have to survive in the rest of the world and against it. That's the ego.

And so without the sense of separation created by the mind, all there is is the continuum. You and the universe are one. And in a way one could say you are this, you are the, when you get in touch with the, the spaceless essence, the formless space, timeless essence of yourself, that is the heart of the universe.

The heart of the universe does not have a particular location. It's not somewhere out there. It is concealed in every being.

So that is God in you, as you. Some mystics had that realization and then they shouted suddenly, joyfully, they shouted, yes, I'm God. Sufis, some Sufis, some Christians shouted, yes, yes.

They shouldn't have done that. Because it gets misunderstood and the ego that identifies with form doesn't like that. And so usually then bad things happen to them.

But they probably didn't mind anymore. Jesus tried somehow to convey what he had realized to his listeners. So he had to use some language that they could understand.

Relatively, he was talking to relatively simple people. Now, he couldn't have said the formless. They would have gone, what?

He had to use terms that they could somehow relate to, to convey something that's beyond words. So he said, I and the Father are one. It is not I who does things, it's the Father through me does it.

He used, it was a patriarchal society, so he had to use, if he had said mother, it would have said, well, that's only a woman. It was a patriarchal society, so he called it father. In a different society, he would have called it mother.

And in a way, the term, the mother, is closer to the reality than father, because mother is the openness, the feminine is the openness, the open vessel. So in a way, it's closer to

the formless spaciousness than the masculine, not that it in itself is either masculine or feminine, no. So he used the term father.

And then they said, oh, good teacher. He said, don't call me good. There's only one good, and that's the one.

The good is the God, God is the good. He didn't say that, I'm saying that because I'm speaking English, where good and God happen to be very similar. There's only one, only one is good, or something he said.

Only the one, only one is good. Don't call me good, what does that mean? It means don't transform this form into, don't focus on the form, realize the formless through this form, you can do that.

Realize the formless in yourself. You are the light, he said. He said not only I am the light, he did say that, but he also said, you are the light of the world.

You are the light of the world. What is that? Which means the very thing that illuminates the whole world.

The consciousness that illuminates the whole world without which nothing could be. You are that. So it was a hard job to use language to convey something that's beyond language.

And at a time when everything, language was so limited, at that time in India, they had already a highly developed terminology for such things as for the spiritual dimension. But where Jesus was teaching, that highly developed terminology was not yet in existence. And even if it had been in existence, the people he spoke to would not have understood.

So once you connect with the one, you realize that the space within, you can then look at any teaching and see the truth that's hiding in the words. You're not then misled by the words. And wherever you look, you can penetrate and say, oh, I know exactly what that meant when it was said.

You can look at the essential truth of Buddhism, the words of the Buddha, and see the truth that's in there, the truth of the teachings of Jesus. You can use any tradition. In the Hindu tradition, it's the most highly developed spiritual tradition.

You see it in so many forms there. And it's always, it's a recognition. Oh, yes.

And then you can also, because there's so many books these days that come out, and you only need a few, really. And so you can go into a bookstore and open a book and read from that sense, place of connectedness with being, and then sense whether the words have power or not, whether they have come out of presence or out of

accumulated knowledge. So all you need is, or you look on Amazon, I think you can read a few pages from each book there, just to really see.

You can then feel whether that is, and then you might enjoy, if it comes from presence, it may help you, or you may just enjoy it. Or you may not want to read it, don't need to. So you can use your wisdom that is there when you connect with the formless.

And then you look at teachings. There was one question asked, what about channeled teachings, the question asked. Can we trust channeled teachings or not?

Teachings by dead masters. And of course, this again, here, the same thing applies. A teaching is not true just because it's channeled.

And a teaching is not untrue just because it's channeled. You have to apply your wisdom when you look at a teaching. And of course, there's the famous dictum as regards the dead masters.

Just because they are dead doesn't mean they're smart. Which of course is true. Sometimes people are impressed when something is channeled because it's channeled.

So channeled neither means that it's true or not true. You have to use your wisdom and take a look at the teaching and sense whether it comes from a deep place or from a superficial place. And just easy to do after a while, very easy.

And then you cannot be misled anymore, it's fine. So some teachings are helpful. There are some channeled teachings are deep and other channeled teachings are not deep.

They might just tell stories, what life is like on other planets and so on. If you might enjoy reading it, it doesn't. On the other hand, some channeled teachings are deep.

Ego can come in into any teaching. So you have to be aware of that. Any teacher that you go to, there could be ego creeping in when the teacher says, there are many teachings around these days, but no teaching has actually reached the level that I'm at.

Then you know that, oh, could that be ego? Yes, probably. And even into channeled teachings, ego can come in.

It can be the ego of the person who's doing the channeling. It can be the ego of the entity that is channeled. Even in that realm, people can still carry egos wanting to be important.

So be alert and look and see, and you'll know what's right for you and what's not right. Increasingly, I would say the only reason why you read more books is just for the enjoyment of it. I still read spiritual books occasionally, sometimes books that people send me.

Well, I can't read them all, but, and I sometimes think there's a deep enjoyment when I see the truth again reflected in some other forms. Yes, that's it, he's got it, he's got it, yes. The bell is a wonderful meditation device.

I always recommend that you follow the sound with your attention, and then it gradually subsides, and then all that's left is attention itself. So the form dies down, the form arises, and then gradually it dies, and when the form has died, all that's left is consciousness. First, there was consciousness of the sound.

And then the sound subsides, and then there's just consciousness of nothing, or consciousness of itself. Same thing, no thing.

[Speaker 2] (56:19 - 1:13:03)

Welcome to this Qigong meditation. In this Qigong meditation, we will move through various stages, through the gross physical body to the very subtle body or energy. And then gradually, as you practice this Qigong meditation more and more, you'll find you'll move right into stillness, transcending both gross and subtle body.

You can do this practice either standing, or sitting comfortably in a chair. You can also sit in traditional cross-legged meditation posture. When you get to the level of beginning to feel the qi in the body, this qi is fluid, it wants to move.

It's meant to move, it's not meant to be stagnant. So all qi flows. Flows in the body, and what we call outside the body, throughout the whole universe.

It's energy, alive, vibrant, fluid energy. And staying connected to this energy can lead you to the source of this energy, stillness itself. And from that still point, movement happens.

And this movement happens through this energy. Then energy manifests itself into form. So this energy can be very subtle.

But when we practice Qigong, we are practicing so we can begin to feel this subtle body. The energy that you are. For you are 99% empty space, and through this empty space, energy flows.

In connection to this, spontaneous movement can happen. Even spontaneous words. For true creativity arises from stillness, becomes energy, then form.

So let's go into this Qigong meditation together. Sitting comfortably in a chair, come to sit at the edge of your chair. Sit right up onto your sit bones, so you're not rolling back, but sit right up onto your sit bones, just on the edge of your chair, with your feet parallel, flat on the floor.

And legs, perhaps, and feet hips, hip distance apart. Your hands rest comfortably on your

lap, either face down or face up. And your spine is nice and straight, so imagine the crown of your head being pulled towards the heavens, and your sit bones and your feet being pulled towards the earth.

You may wish to close your eyes. And let's just become aware of our breath. Just notice how you're being breathed at this moment.

And become aware of your body. Scan your body from head to toe, toe to head, just noticing perhaps any tension, tightness, pain. Just notice, and now relax your body from head to toe.

Relaxing your face. Now we'll move into the counting of the breath. And what that would look like is that we're gonna be regulating the breath, so the inhale is on a count of four, and your exhale is on a count of four.

So you inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four.

Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four.

Continue your counting on your own. If thoughts arise, just notice it and return your attention to the counting, to inhaling, exhaling, regulating your breathing. If you find as you do this, you can even breathe deeper, you can count for six.

So inhaling for a count of six, exhaling for a count of six, only if you feel comfortable to do so. Staying present, now you may wish to stay and remain counting your breath, or you can stop counting and now begin to follow your breathing. So follow your inhalation and your exhalation, keeping your attention on the breath.

If you'd like to take this a little deeper, begin to feel and sense the breathing, feeling the breath as you inhale, feeling it in the body, sensing the breath, and feeling and sensing the breath as it leaves the body. And going a little deeper yet, and that is to begin to feel and sense the chi, your energy body. Perhaps it feels like a slight tingling, a warmth, or even a numbness.

Just feel into that energy. Or perhaps you're feeling a contraction in your body, some ache or pain. Feel into that.

For those aches and pains, it's trapped energy. Breathing into that energy, breathing into that sensation of perhaps stagnant chi. All energy flows.

It's meant to flow. It's meant to move and not be stagnated. So just now allow your body to move however it spontaneously wants to move, without thinking about it, just tapping into this energy, being vigilant with awareness, feeling the breath, feeling the energy, and just allow the energy to move you.

This is not about a certain form or structure. It's about expressing, allowing this energy

to express through your body. And just natural, maybe even simple or gentle movements, maybe nothing large, but maybe small movements.

Just allow it to move. Keeping connected to this energy and following this energy, just watching it move through you. Breathing as you move, just allowing it to take its expression.

Chi is soft and fluid, and so much of the time throughout the day, we move through our minds, allowing our mind to dictate our movement. Just allow energy to start moving through the body, opening up your chi channels. Now make sure that your mind isn't thinking that you have to be moving.

You don't have to be doing anything. This is not about doing. It's about being one with life, the energy that you are, and expressing that life through your form.

And when you're ready, if you feel like you want to stop, you can stop. If you feel like you want to continue moving, feeling and sensing, following your breath or counting your breath, you can do so. But for now, it's a joy to be with you in Qigong meditation.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:07 - 1:19:30)

I haven't mentioned being in the body for a while, so let's feel it now, that you are actually, feel the energy field of your, as you sit there, and I sit here, we feel a certain aliveness pervading the body. It's very simple, but some attention has to go there, otherwise you can't feel anything. Which means you have to take some attention away from thinking.

If you're fully in thought, you can't feel your body at all. You don't feel alive anymore. Just abstractions.

So the beautiful thing is, it's not only that your body loves being acknowledged and getting your attention, it's a very healing thing to do, and most importantly, it slows down your thinking considerably, if it doesn't even stop it completely, because if you have your attention here, you can't have it there. And this is the embodied state, it's quite nice. What you're feeling is not ultimately the physical body, it's already halfway beyond the physical body.

Qi, life energy, and I call that, it's halfway between form and formlessness. It's a bridge, Qi is a bridge between the formless dimension and the form. So it's wonderful to sense that.

And it can be, you can do it anywhere, when there's enough room, you don't need to focus on externals 100%, have some attention in the body. We sit here, boredom

disappears, for example, when you have attention in the body, you're not bored, you actually enjoy being, feeling alive. And that can serve as an anchor for staying present.

And that can be one way of looking around at the world without unnecessary mental labeling, as clarity of perception. And looking at the situations that arise in that clarity of perception. And from that clarity of perception, you know what you need to do, or what needs doing in that situation.

It's a higher intelligence that you contact via the body, a higher intelligence than the quiet knowledge of the human mind. And then you know what to do, it acts, it tells, you have an insight, or spontaneous doing. Or if there's nothing to do, being is enough, you can enjoy just being.

Sleepless nights are a wonderful opportunity for going into the body. Oh, I can't sleep, I wish I could sleep. Why don't you do something useful, go into the body.

And then you lie there and feel the aliveness. Oh, I wish, I hope I won't go to sleep too soon, because it's so nice. And before you know it, you've gone to sleep, perhaps.

And then you wake up in the morning, perhaps you still feel a lingering sensation there in the body, and if you don't, as you wake up, put your attention into the body first, before you start thinking about the day. For just a couple of minutes, three minutes, two minutes. It's a good start of the day.

To feel alive, it can't be a bad start of the day. I'll tell you what a bad start of the day is, it's listening to the news, first thing. It's a grounding, but not a heavy grounding, it's rooted in being.

Hi.

[Speaker 3] (1:19:59 - 1:20:59)

Hi. My question is on sexuality. I would say instinctive impulse.

When I see, for example, a woman jogging, to look, most times I look. And also, when the lady is beautiful inside also, how do I balance not getting too lost in the little play, you know. That's my question.

[Speaker 1] (1:21:00 - 1:31:38)

Okay. Thank you, I know what you mean. You may have heard of something called Tantra.

It's a, that means basically bringing consciousness into something that is usually unconscious. For example, sexuality. I would even include other things like eating.

Things that tend to pull you into unconsciousness. I don't know if you've observed some people, who the moment they start eating, they become quite unconscious, relatively speaking. And then when they stop eating, there's a bit more consciousness again.

They go. And then they wake up. So eating consciously would be bringing some awareness into that.

Tantra is traditionally used to point to the possibility of bringing consciousness into sex. And sex starts the moment you're looking at a woman jogging. And basically what Tantra means is not to make it into a means to an end, not to look to the next moment and the one after that.

The final moment of man-woman union always being orgasm. But sex starts with looking. And to be at every moment, honor the moment and enjoy the moment for what it is.

Which is, there's nothing wrong when your body, mind, organism gets drawn to that. You know that this is happening. If you don't know that this is happening, you become the reaction and then you're lost.

But if you know that this is happening, you can actually allow yourself to be drawn. You can look and enjoy just looking. There's no need to go beyond that.

I enjoy looking at all kinds of humans, including women or men, it doesn't really matter. I enjoy the human form. I like to sometimes sit in a cafe in a corner and simply watch the human beings come in, leave.

Some are old, some are young, some are beautiful, some are not so beautiful. They're all beautiful inside. But on the external, the variety of the human form is just quite wonderful to watch.

And if you don't want anything, the question is whether the attraction turns into wanting. The attraction is the attention moves there and it's unconscious. And then the moment comes when you realize that the attention has moved there.

There's no need for you, as some spiritual traditions might tell you, you must not look at a woman. The moment you notice your attention moving, look somewhere else. By denying it, you really intensify ultimately the unconscious urge to look.

There's even in Buddhist monasteries, the monk, when I first visited a monastery, I could see a woman was trying to give a monk something, a pencil or something, and he said, I'm sorry, I can't take it from you, you have to put it on the table and then I'll take it. I'm not allowed to take something from a woman. And this is how, because the power of sexuality was so strong that for a long time in the past, people were afraid of it because you can't control yourself.

If you even just take something, there might be a flash of energy coming. Who knows what will happen next? If you just take a pencil from a woman, what's going to happen next?

So to enjoy, you can also, for Tantra, you can enjoy touching someone. There's no need to, it's all really connected with the self-sufficiency of the present moment and not always needing, wanting the end result, and that includes any kind of sexual attraction. If you bring in present moment living into normal life, you can also practice it there, where you simply enjoy whatever phenomenon is arising at this moment for what it is, instead of it becoming some kind of wanting something in the future, wanting more.

Observe the impulse and if you get lost in it, then you have to wait until you wake up and then can observe yourself running after her. I remember I had a friend in England many, many years ago who suddenly became very interested in spirituality and asked very deep questions. And a couple of times, we were sitting somewhere outside in a park or cafe, and I was talking to him, that was my early form of teaching, seeing individuals coming and asking questions, and I observed a couple of times he was listening to me, it was so important to him, just this vital question was being answered, and suddenly I could see him, he was looking somewhere else behind me.

And I thought, what's going on? He stopped listening. And then I looked around and there was a woman sitting there behind and spirituality was so important for him, but then something else came up that was even more powerful at that time, and that was the attraction.

And then I pointed it out and he suddenly, he was like a man waking up from sleep or from a dream. He was completely lost. And then it happened again.

And after that he was able to be aware of that pull. If you are aware of that pull, you are not the pull. You are not in the grip of that pull.

It's nature. The pull is part of the physical nature. But then if you are not aware, you become the pull, and it dominates the next thing that you do.

You may run after her or you may try to approach her or you may lose yourself in fantasizing for the next 30 minutes. All kinds of things happen. If you become the pull, the pull becomes action or it becomes thought.

So are you the pull that you can sense or are you the knower, the one that knows that this is happening? And if you can be the knower, you can allow yourself or your body, your physical organism, to experience whatever is happening at this moment without losing yourself in that. It's a spiritual practice.

So I recommend that you go into a place where you are likely to encounter many beautiful women. I don't know where that would be, the beach or... And practice.

Sit there and let your attention be pulled. It's a wonderful practice. And women can do it with men or with other women or men.

With men it doesn't matter. The important thing is, can you be the awareness of what's happening or are you losing yourself in the pull? So as a practice, just be there, space for the impulse, space for the attraction, without believing that you need to change something.

If you suppress it, I don't think it's the most skillful thing to do, to actually say, I must not look, because something will build up inside you. It will make it even more powerful. And it will not become obsessive.

The awareness will deepen as you practice that. And then you have a choice. There is always a choice.

It doesn't mean you cannot act. You can act from the awareness. You can still, if you want to meet someone, you can still approach her and say, I don't know what, nothing comes to mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:39 - 1:31:41)

That's why I've never done it.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:45 - 1:41:32)

It has arisen in the past. And the question, what can I say? I don't know.

But you may be better at it. Anything, stay with, be the awareness rather than be what happens in it. And you can do it with any kind of appetite.

If you feel pulled to eating, I'm sure you don't, but if somebody feels pulled towards eating more than the body really needs excessively, there's always a moment when the impulse comes to eat more. And so you want, are you able to observe the impulse, knowing that you've just had a meal an hour ago, are you able to observe the impulse arising, or do you become the impulse, and then the next, you don't wake up until you have halfway through the sandwich that you've taken out of the fridge, and suddenly you realize you are eating a sandwich. People have reported to me that this is what happens to them.

They suddenly realize they're already halfway into a sandwich and didn't know how it even, they moved to the fridge unconsciously. The impulse was completely unconscious. And a similar thing happens to people who feel the pull towards alcohol or some kind of drug.

They have the drink in their hands and they didn't know how it got there. It was automatic, unconscious. So if anybody feels a pull, an excessive pull towards certain

things, be there as, can you be there as the watcher of that impulse or that pull.

Then there is some freedom that comes in. You can say, yes, I choose to eat another sandwich, or I choose to follow this woman and see where she goes, or I choose to have another drink, or I choose to light a cigarette. Or you can just be with the impulse and observe how it arises.

What does it feel like? Everybody knows what it feels like, a sexual feeling. What does it feel like?

Just observe the feeling of it. Oh, interesting. Or the feeling of hunger.

It's not really hunger. It's the feeling of the need for food when the body doesn't really need it, as an addictive need. What does it feel like in the body?

Where does it arise? Observe it. Or the impulse to light a cigarette.

Where does it, can you be there when the first impulse comes? And the more you practice Presence, the easier it is to be there as these other two, otherwise unconscious impulses come. And then you will sometimes find that the impulse subsides when you're observing it for a minute or two, and then you don't need to go to the fridge and eat a sandwich.

Then you don't need to run after that woman. It's enough to say, Oh, beautiful. And you allow her to be wonderful.

And then you look at a beautiful flower. And so being the Presence, rather than being the reaction, the impulse, the pull that arises, be the space for it. Make it into spiritual practice.

Rather than believing that you're not spiritually advanced enough because you still feel that pull, that's not how it is. Spiritually advanced means you're there as a witness for what is arising. That's all.

So practice this ample opportunity, I'm sure, in your life, and find out that you can be free even as these impulses arise. You don't need to lose yourself in it. I had a great teacher in that respect, and that was my father, who passed away two years ago, and I loved him dearly.

But he, almost to the end of his life, which was the age of 90, he experienced what you describe very, very strongly throughout his life. So much so that whenever he saw a woman, a beautiful woman, he would be lost. His attention would be totally drawn, and his behavior would become unpredictable.

And even when I was a child, I observed it. My mother constantly complained about it. And he was well-known in the neighborhood for that.

In fact, other women warned their friends that look out for this man. And so later on I realized, in addition to the sexual pull, there was something much more powerful in him that was a psychological pull towards the female, and the psychological pull towards receiving attention from the female. Because from what he told me about his childhood, he was the seventh child in the Catholic family.

The seventh child, and everybody was tired of more children in the family. His mother was tired, his sisters were tired, and then the seventh child came, and oh no, not another one. And then he got very little attention from his mother.

The mother was exhausted. He got relatively little attention. He had all these older sisters around him, and they didn't give him that much attention either.

They were living their own life. He was craving for the love of his mother, and never got it. And for the rest of his life, he craved for the attention of women, and he would do anything to get it.

And that often took the form of trying to seduce women, but it never became a true, meaningful relationship, because after he had done that, he very quickly became angry because his feeling towards women was ambivalent. The draw was there, but also great anger because the primordial woman, the mother, had not given him what he needed. So in addition to the sexual pull, there can be a strong, in certain cases, a strong psychological pull for attention, but that may not be the case with you.

But I learned a lot about people driven by unconsciousness, an otherwise very intelligent man in many areas, extremely intelligent, but complete loss of consciousness in certain areas of his life. And again, that is a subject that is interesting and that may apply to one or two of you still, that even as presence arises very strongly in you, there may be one or two areas of your life, whenever that arises, whatever it may be, a certain kind of relationship, a certain subject matter, whenever that arises, you still revert to complete unconsciousness. Old reactive patterns happen.

It could be, and in some cases it's to do with sexuality for some people, in other cases it may be to do with money for some people who from an early age have had psychological issues about money never being enough, and whenever the subject comes up, you lose consciousness completely. So you could have a person who is quite present in all areas of his life, but the moment the telephone rings and on the other end this voice says, this is your investment advisor, I have some news for you, you can see the descent into unconsciousness. What's going on?

Before he was completely present. And if you know that, and you may not, perhaps only other people can tell you that that's still there in your life, listen to them. If ten people tell you that's the case, they may be right, then it's to become particularly alert when certain situations come up so that you can be present as the witness, don't lose yourself

in it.

Okay, so next time we meet, you can give us a progress report. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:41:51 - 1:42:51)

So you made a joke about people studying PhDs. I'm doing one right now. And because I've been trained in this special field for a good long time, it may make sense to endeavor to stay in this field and help to raise the energy frequency of the people around me.

I find it hard to sustain this and part of me wants to leave because it's saying you may be more fulfilled in one-to-one interactions somewhere else where you can actually make a difference. Could you comment about this? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (1:42:54 - 1:43:17)

Well, of course, you're asking somebody who abandoned his PhD. I'm not saying you should do that too, nor am I saying that you should not abandon it, so let's just see is the subject matter? What is the subject matter?

[Speaker 3] (1:43:19 - 1:43:30)

I work with Rolls-Royce to develop greener engines for jet engine applications for airplanes at your university that you abandoned.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:40 - 1:43:42)

You are? Oh.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:46 - 1:44:00)

So, as you know, the mind structures there are very intense and in conflict and I don't have enough presence to sustain myself.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:04 - 1:44:06)

And you are how many years into it?

[Speaker 3] (1:44:06 - 1:44:09)

Oh, I'll finish it, so maybe half a year.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:09 - 1:44:10)

You finish in half a year?

[Speaker 3] (1:44:11 - 1:44:21)

Yes, but previously I was thinking about going into academia because I really love teaching. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:23 - 1:44:26)

Well, if it's only half a year, you might as well finish it.

[Speaker 5] (1:44:26 - 1:44:27)

Oh, I will.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:33 - 1:47:08)

The next step, of course, then you have to see whether you want to carry on in the academic world or step out of it into something different. A time came for me when I felt so much of an outsider in the world of sherry drinking, academia and ego stalking and people identifying with their knowledge with a few, there were a few exceptions there. At some point, it wasn't a question of deciding whether or not to carry on, it was a realization, that's it.

So when the answer comes to you, it's no longer a question, then it's the true answer. If it's no longer a decision-making process, but the realization from within comes so strongly one day, it could come now, it could come tomorrow, tonight, or in a year's time, that, okay, this is what I have to do. I'm never telling people what to do because the answer, what to do, has to come from within.

So, it's not a decision-making process or you can't, or if you put up the number of reasons you could theoretically say, okay, here I'm going to put down on this side of the paper the reasons for staying in the academic world, and here I'm going to write down the reasons for not staying, that's one way, but that's not the powerful way of arriving at a true answer. The powerful way is become still and wait for the realization to come ready-made, and you can't even question it. Then you believe or stay and know how to stay.

It might come and say, I'll stay for a year and see what I can do with presence and continue to work. Who knows? It can only come to you, but when it comes, it's no longer a question, there's no question about it anymore.

So you have to wait for it to come from that deep place, and it's quite possible that it's already there, but you don't recognize it. It's quite possible that deep down you already know, but you don't fully realize that you already know.

[Speaker 3] (1:47:13 - 1:47:44)

I surrendered to the PhD three years ago. It wasn't a choice I would have made, but I realized that I'm good at what I do, according to the world. So I thought that my soul

knew then, but I find now that I don't, so maybe we'll just have to just stay for a little longer.

[Speaker 1] (1:47:47 - 1:49:47)

Yes, yes. It started with, I'll tell you just very briefly how it came with me to do a PhD. I had already, this strange awakening that happened to me, happened to me in the same year that I started doing the PhD before I went to do graduate work, because what happened was the shift happened within, but on the outer level my life carried on.

It had a momentum its normal way, except that some things just came very easily, so the scholarship suddenly was offered, and there was nothing else to do, so I drifted into it, and I enjoyed being there in these strange, unreal surroundings of the university, divorced from normal reality, and after a year I already realized this is not my life anymore, academic work, and basically stopped working on it, but still not knowing what to do, so I carried on doing supervisions, which is teaching undergraduates, it's quite well paid, some people live on that for ten years, and stayed for another two years doing that, and virtually stopped working on the PhD, and then suddenly one morning say, I'm leaving, no question about it, I have to leave, and so a couple of months later I was gone, and so wait for the answer to come, it can only come to you, but not through analytical thinking, so you're already deeply connected, so it won't be long, I believe, now that, before it comes,

[Speaker 3] (1:49:48 - 1:49:50)

thank you for sharing,

[Speaker 1] (1:49:51 - 1:50:05)

in the meantime, enjoy the present moment, even there, it's quite beautiful, on your bike, along the river,

[Speaker 3] (1:50:06 - 1:50:09)

I row, it's beautiful, that's my, that keeps me sane,

[Speaker 5] (1:50:28 - 1:50:29)

It's hard not to be nervous

[Speaker 4] (1:50:29 - 1:51:22)

about the microphone, can we help our kids, and I suppose to make it broader, it could be anybody that we love, really, or that we're working with, but with respect to children, can we help them transcend this period of unconsciousness that I think all of us have gone through, or is it necessary for them to go through it on their own, sometimes I feel

quite helpless when my kids are suffering, and I get drawn into the suffering very easily, so I want to be able to help them get there faster, if that makes sense at all.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:25 - 1:51:30)

Well first, you have how many children? Two children. How old?

[Speaker 4] (1:51:31 - 1:51:33)

My daughter is seven, and my son is four.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:37 - 1:51:53)

Well first of all, they're very fortunate to have a conscious parent, that's you, and their father is conscious?

[Speaker 4] (1:51:54 - 1:52:04)

Not so conscious, but conscious enough that he's supportive of me being here, and being with the kids, so that's something, right?

[Speaker 1] (1:52:10 - 1:55:41)

So there are more children nowadays born, what the percentage is, I don't know, who may not have to go through the deep unconsciousness that we had to go through, I certainly had to, and also there are more children born nowadays to parents who are in the awakening process, in other words, relatively conscious parents. In my generation, I can't think of any conscious parents. There might have been some, but very rare, extremely rare.

They are still rare now, but much less so than before. My parents certainly were lovely, I loved them, lovely beings, but deeply unconscious, and that wasn't the normal state. So the question is then, how to help them to stay relatively conscious so that they don't get drawn into the mass unconsciousness that pervades, still pervades mass culture, and the technology that promotes unconsciousness and addictive behavior that children get addicted to, the most powerful teaching is not what you say or do to them, but your state of consciousness at home.

So that's the very foundation for teaching your children, has nothing to do with teaching. The foundation for transmitting consciousness is not even wanting to transmit consciousness to them, but to hold the space of presence as you interact with them at home, and also to hold presence as much as possible as you interact with your husband, because there's a relationship there that will infect them with either presence or pain body. So the most vital thing is before even thinking of doing anything is the being, being conscious there, because they observe how you behave, and they kind of, they take that on board to some extent.

Of course, another influence is the mass culture, especially as they spend more time at school. And then, occasionally there may be things that you can point out to them so that they stay in touch with immediate experience, for example, sensory experience. Don't let them lose touch with nature.

Many children these days are so involved in technological games, they don't experience nature anymore. It's something totally alien to them, and that's a very harmful thing. It's a great deprivation of not being deprived of the immediate experience of the natural world, which puts you in touch with the deeper levels of your own being to experience an animal at home is a great help.

I hope you have an animal or two.

[Speaker 5] (1:55:41 - 1:55:41)

We do, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:55:42 - 1:58:07)

A dog. Yeah. So there's one way already, if children relate to the dog, it's a non-conceptual relationship.

You touch the dog, you look after the dog. I'm getting them out into nature periodically without the gadgets. Without gadgets, right.

That they usually have. Yes. It goes on for hours.

It used to be more television, but now it seems to be even more that, and then the rest of the time there's television, which is the state of semi-comatose hypnosis. Also, so to somehow, it may not be easy because everybody else is doing that kind of thing. Not saying you have to eliminate that completely, but discourage them from spending 100% of their free time with those things.

Take them into nature without the gadgets. And encourage them to direct sensory experience, to touch, to feel, to look at things, not to confuse conceptual labeling with true knowledge or experience. Your youngest is four, he said.

So at that time they're already four. They know what things are called and so on. That is, again, so that they don't, when they are learning language, not to equate concepts with reality.

When you teach them what it is, encourage them to touch it, to see it, to continue to feel it, not just to say, this is called such and such. Continue to look at it. Otherwise, the moment you have a label, you stop experiencing and all you have is a mental label.

[Speaker 4] (1:58:08 - 1:58:24)

And they label themselves as well. I mean, I notice this is much more with my daughter, maybe because my son is still young, but she'll come home and say, I'll never get it. I'm stupid at this or that.

[Speaker 1] (1:58:27 - 2:02:25)

That's a good way to encourage, to point out that not to identify with their thoughts. So if you can occasionally point out that's a thought, it's just a thought, and they don't have to believe in every thought that comes. If you can somehow work with their, to realize that they are not their thoughts, so there's a space between them and their thoughts, to observe their thoughts, and just when thoughts come, you can explain it's no more than a thought.

It might not be the reality. It's not true. Pain body, they have pain body a little bit, as most humans have.

Disidentify from the pain body by pointing out that this is the pain body. I often have said, don't call it pain body for the children. Give it a name.

Call it something. And occasionally they get taken over by that. Point out to them afterwards, what was that?

What took you over? What would you call it? So that an awareness develops.

There's the emotion, and there's the awareness. So encourage that kind of thing. They're able to look at the emotion that takes them over from time to time, which is associated with certain thought patterns also.

And after the event, not during the event initially, see what was it that took you over when you started screaming yesterday. What was that? And then see what does it feel like.

Invent some game so that you can make it into something that they can be aware of. And then let's wait for next time it comes and see how that feels. If you have it, then you can point out after you've woken up from your pain body that, oh, that happened to me.

The same thing happened to me. Awareness. The key in education is to show the possibility of being aware rather than always being identified with whatever arises in their mind.

When I was at the Dalai Lama event in Vancouver last November, October, somebody asked about education, and I suggested to introduce a new subject into the school curriculum, a subject that is more important, more vital than any other subject. And somehow it should flow into every other subject, and that subject is awareness. If we could make awareness into a school subject in the curriculum as the most important one,

which one can teach children to be aware of their thoughts as they arise, to be aware of their emotions as they arise, to be aware, more aware of sense perceptions, to be aware of your feelings and other people's feelings.

Perhaps one could devise games that promote awareness. We were already talking earlier, the question before, it can also be done through the Internet. Anything that promotes I don't work with children so other people may be more qualified to come up with these things, who knows.

So awareness is the key thing, whether you call it, you don't have to call it that, just practice it. Because if they can remain aware, then everything will be easier in their lives. If they lose awareness, then they have to go through suffering, and then eventually find awareness again through the sufferings they undergo.

So it's an interesting thing. I'd like to hear more if people have ideas about what to do with children, how to teach presence to children, awareness to children.

[Speaker 4] (2:02:25 - 2:02:27)

I'd like to hear more too.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:29 - 2:03:41)

So for schools then, I know there are some schools that specialize, there are certain Waldorf schools and others, and it's a good thing they particularly encourage the students not to get too much lost in abstraction at an early age, to do things with their hands, to make things with their hands, pottery, all the wonderful things, to make little simple things out of wood, to stay in touch with the immediacy of the sensory environment, not to get lost, not even to learn reading and writing too early. Some, I believe, it's far too early to get into those concepts. In my generation, six was the year when you began to read and write, but I believe sometimes these days they try to teach that at an earlier age, which I believe is not a good thing.

So there's a lot there that can be done, but the central point of it all is presence or awareness. That's the teaching.

[Speaker 5] (2:03:42 - 2:03:44)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:03 - 3:59:04)

Should you engage in intimacy even though now that you are awakening and understand you don't need a human being to complete you? Should you engage in intimacy? Now, of course, should doesn't come into it at all.

Neither should you engage in intimacy, nor should you not engage in intimacy. Should is not, there's no should. You either do or you don't.

Maybe the question means do I have to? Only you can know that. Whether you feel that that is the right thing now, then it arises.

But the fact that you no longer need to be completed psychologically does not mean that necessarily you no longer engage in intimacy. It just means that the egoic part of an intimate relationship is then no longer there. And that's a great relief.

You can still have an intimate relationship on a physical, emotional level without the psychological need that says I need you to be the answer to my life. Psychological completion. Because it is that delusion that there can be a human being who is psychologically going to complete me that creates all that, a lot of the conflict in relationship.

Because after a while you realize that the other human is not living up to your expectations because no human being could. But you can still have an intimate relationship even without the need to be psychologically completed. You still have a physical form.

So the physical form may, for example, have sexual desire. And again, it may also have emotional feelings which exist within the greater context when you are awakened or even the spirit dimension is already there in your life. Then there's the greater context for all that in the spaciousness of who you are.

Those things appear or happen. Not as an answer to your life's problems and not as an absolute need, not even an absolute need on the emotional, physical level, not as an absolute need. But the form as which you appear may feel drawn to another form and that's fine.

And if it doesn't work or if there is no other form because you are in prison or some other reason, then you can live with that without turning into an unhappy being because you are in touch with that which is beyond form. The unfulfillment on the level of form creates, yes, there's some area then in your life that's unfulfilled and you can feel that. And yet it does not turn into, it doesn't make your life miserable or makes you unhappy or creates a mental interpretation that tells you that your life is dreadful and meaningless because that need is not fulfilled.

Because as presence enters your life, that need exists as a small manifestation within the greater spaciousness that you are. And if it's met, it's fine. And if the need is not met, you can live with that also without turning unhappy or feeling that you're not alive anymore.

No, you are intensely alive and in the depths of that aliveness you are not a form

identity. And in the depths of that aliveness you have no needs of other forms. But you can enjoy other forms but the absolute need is not there because all forms are already contained in that, in you.

You're ultimately from the deepest, seen from the deepest level, you're always meeting yourself in another form. So, no should or shouldn't, you may or you may not engage, as you put it, engage in intimacy. I assume that the belief that there's a human being there that's going to make you happy has dissolved and you realize you don't need that not to make you happy or to fulfill you.

And so, with the psychological need gone you can appreciate another human being and you can appreciate emotional or physical levels if they are there. Dear Eckhart, since I've had a spiritual experience I do not feel the old passion with which I lived my life. Is it a holy indifference please comment.

The questioner is 70 years old in brackets here. Since I have had a spiritual experience I do not feel the old passion with which I lived my life. Everybody finds that when the spiritual dimension enters your life, the transcendent dimension enters your life, then the various situations of your life, things that happen, events, places and so on are no longer, no longer have the power that they had before.

Before all you have, you look to the things of the world to find some kind of fulfillment or satisfaction there. And they have enormous importance and heaviness, situations and people. You are looking to the world for fulfillment.

And that's why everything that happens has such seriousness to it in the, as long as the transcendent dimension has not come into your life. And that's why everybody is so worried and fearful, expecting things that the world cannot give. So the transcendent dimension to some extent loosens the absolute attachment to the things of this world, situations, places, relationships also.

It brings in a sense of spaciousness, of freedom. You can enjoy places, situations, people. What no longer operates is the addictive quality that in the unawakened state all these experiences have.

And that's the vital difference, enormous difference between grasping for sensory experience or any life experiences, wanting to experience more on that, including the experience of drama, which can be very addictive. Grasping for experiences, looking for fulfillment through experiences, never really finding it for very long. There's an addiction behind that.

So addiction has much wider implications than what we usually call addiction to substances and so on. In the unawakened state there is an addiction to experience, because something is expected of experience that ultimately is not there. So there's a

continuous greedy reaching out, whether it is relationship experience, sexual experience.

All these are fine, but the question is, is the addictive element there a greedy grasping for the drama, life drama, an unconscious need to experience drama, reaching for sensory experience, including eating. Eating can become compulsive. There comes the addictive quality into that.

Instead, to enjoy food, fine. But without the awakened, the transcendent dimension in your life, there is a grasping. It varies from person to person where the main area of their grasping is.

The main area of their grasping may be food, it may be sexuality, it may be relationships, it may be money. For many people, there's the absolute importance of their investments and money. And you can see the moment they talk about it, they become upset, unbalanced, confused, unconscious.

Grasping, even wanting to experience, needing to experience, excitement, perhaps go out, experience something dangerous. Experience, I'm grasping, why am I seeking danger? Some people seek extreme experiences.

I'm seeking that because through that, I want that deepened sense of aliveness. Of course, it's very short and then always leaves behind that, okay, that wasn't enough. So you're always looking then for the next thing.

And if you're very limited, if your personal life is limited, and you can't, maybe you can't travel or you don't have the possibility of experiencing different kinds of relationships, you're stuck in, you can still go into the dream world of imagining experiences and lose yourself in there. Or you can read novels and romances or whatever and escape into that, into somebody else's life who is again full of the characters and those novels are just like you. They're all grasping for experiences.

So that's a very, it's a normal kind of existence as long as the transcendent dimension isn't there. The pursuit of experience and believing that there's some kind of solution there for your life through changing this or that in the outer world of experience. And that makes life into some, just a frustrating search for some answer there which isn't there.

And the transcendent dimension comes in and then your relationship with experiencing changes. It becomes spacious. The grasping element, the addictive quality in your relationship with experiences begins to dissolve.

And it actually enhances your ability to enjoy experiences. When the transcendent dimension has come in, the stillness, the spaciousness, the alert presence, that becomes, no matter what experience you go into in your life, that always becomes a

vital part of the experience. So before there was just, let's say, enjoying eating food, there was the addictive quality with that, the grasping of, you're totally in that, it takes you over.

And now there is a spaciousness while you enjoy the food. You can enjoy the taste. You can enjoy a meal.

Before there was a grasping for it, it wasn't true enjoyment. All those people who are continuously grasping for experience, they're not really enjoying it. It's a, they sometimes seem to be on the surface, but they're not.

It's not really, they're not really having fun. To use a colloquialism, meaning truly enjoy, you're not really having fun. All those people who are running after things, they're not really having fun, to use that expression.

If you want to have fun, the transcendent dimension needs to be there, and that becomes the essential part of every experience, the added dimension to every experience. And then you sit there and enjoy that food, but you don't need to eat more than you really want, the body really wants. You enjoy what's there.

You enjoy activities, doing this or that, again without the grasping. That's the, why it seems to, as the questioner says, your relation, the way I interpret it, the relationship, your relationship to experiences changes. And that's the vital part of awakening, and that's an enormous freedom.

And that also means when things happen to you that before would have caused unhappiness, some form of suffering, in other words, experiences that would have been called bad or unpleasant, now there is the freedom also to be with that and still feel connected with the underlying peace, even while the outside experience is actually turning into what the mind would call negative, not good, unpleasant.

So, and of course, in life, as you go through life, many experiences are things, experiences of things dissolving, experiences of things being taken away because there's a continuous gain and loss in life, the experiences of things going wrong, which means not according to the expectations, and you are able to be with what is because there is the spaciousness there that you bring to every experience. So the experience, on the one hand, no longer is looked to for fulfillment because you know it can't do that, and on the other hand, the experience no longer has the power to make you unhappy when something is dissolving or experienced as not pleasant on the sensory level.

Then there is the added depth to who you are. So if you're stranded somewhere in the middle of nowhere and it's raining and cold, of course, with the added depth of presence, you can be with that without transforming it into suffering. No experience is then transformed into suffering.

There may still be unpleasantness or pain on the physical level, but you no longer transform certain types of experiences into suffering. Yes, the unpleasantness may still be there, the discomfort, even pain, on the physical, but not suffering. It's only when the experience has an absolute importance to you that it can easily turn into suffering.

When the experience does not have an absolute importance to you but only a relative importance, because the absolute is your presence here. That's the absolute, the unconditioned presence, this. That's the absolute.

Then the relative loses its power to make you unhappy or to cause suffering, because you're not looking to it for personal, absolute personal fulfillment. The fulfillment is only there in the transcendent dimension. All experiences become an adding to.

It's added. It's the icing on the cake, one could almost say. It's something that is added to who you are, as Jesus said.

Be only concerned with the absolute. That should be your main concern. Otherwise, experiences will...

I don't know if he said that. I'm paraphrasing wildly now. Be only concerned with the absolute, the kingdom of heaven, which is your inner state of pure presence.

Be only concerned. That is your main job. And then the rest of your life will fall into place.

It will look after itself. And that's how it is. And life becomes so much easier when the rest of life falls into place.

And even things that don't go as they should, that's fine too. You can be with that. And don't add negative reaction to that event, which causes further negative events.

Every time you add a negative reaction to an event in the realm of cause and effect, you are causing further negativity, not only for yourself, but even within the totality of the collective consciousness. But you can only be free of that, of adding negativity to events, when you are not dependent on the event for your happiness, well-being and inner peace. Then, when the event turns around, it's no longer what you would want it to be, no need to add negativity.

You allow it to dissolve or to do what it does. You can take action. Now, that's a vital thing.

Are you adding through resistance? Why do you resist an event or something that happens? Because you'd want it to be different so that it can make you feel okay.

And the mind says, the event that is there now is not making me feel okay and fulfilled and happy. But there it is. So it's making me unhappy.

You resist it. Negativity arises. Unhappiness arises.

More negative events follow. You will see how quickly situations that seem to be negative from a conventional viewpoint, how quickly they dissolve when you take the negative out of them and see that every event is as it is at this moment and any negativity is the addition of your mind to it. It's not in the situation.

Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. You are adding that. And that's the seed that attracts further negativity, unpleasantness, and so on.

So there's the be content with the fact. I'm talking to the original questioner, but of course it's everybody's question, everybody's experience. Be content with the fact that the way in which you experience life has changed and that the addictive quality has gone out of your life experience.

And then realize that you actually enjoy everything truly now when you don't need it anymore for your true well-being. You don't need to derive ultimate satisfaction from any experience. That's an amazing shift.

I'll say it again. You don't need any longer to derive ultimate satisfaction from any experience. It can't do that.

And so you go to the place where ultimate satisfaction resides, and that's not an experience. Presence is not an experience. It sometimes is called that, an experience of presence, because in some people at first presence arises and then it's gone again.

And then it seems that they experienced presence. But it's not really an experience because it has no form. It's that which underlies all experience.

It's the space for all experience. So you're free in relation to the world of experiences. There's now freedom.

The freedom to enjoy and the freedom to allow things to be that you cannot perhaps enjoy as an experience, but it no longer makes you unhappy. The end of negativity. Welcome.

There was a man that many of you have heard of. Some of you read some of the teachings. Socrates, he lived roughly 2,400 years ago in Greece.

He never wrote anything. His disciples later wrote down what they remembered, and his main disciple was Plato. And Plato then wrote the Socratic Dialogues.

We don't know, of course, whether what Plato wrote was exactly what Socrates taught. In a way, what Plato wrote, in Plato's writing, Socrates is a literary character. So the characteristic of Platonic Dialogues is that Socrates asks questions.

His people who come to him for teaching, he doesn't seem to immediately have the answer. He asks questions, and then the person answers, and he gradually leads the person to the answer. Now, in the Dialogues, which some of you may have read, some of them, not perhaps many people these days read Plato, in the Dialogues, the impression is given that Socrates kind of manipulates a little bit the people who come to him, and the impression is given that he already knows the answer.

He just pretends not to know the answer. That's what comes across in the Dialogues. And I think that is the character that Plato created, but I believe, and I have evidence for this belief, that that's not actually what happened.

I believe, and I'll tell you in a minute why, that Plato actually started every teaching session from a place of not knowing the answer. And so unlike the impression we get if you read, if you read the Platonic Dialogues, that he already knows, he's just pretending not to know. No.

How do I know this? Plato said, I'm sorry, Socrates said, they call me the wisest of all men, and the reason why they call me the wisest of all men is that I'm the only one who knows that he knows nothing. So, and again, when we read it retrospectively after having read the Platonic Dialogues, we think, oh, he's just, again, some kind of affectation.

He's saying, I know nothing. No, I believe that is his genuine starting point was the ability to go into that state of not knowing rather than coming from already having accumulated knowledge just waiting to come out of his head. And this is why he was able to think creatively.

He actually taught, one could say, almost he taught humanity how to think for the first time, to think rationally, but his thinking is creative. It's fresh and new. And it was a process between him and the people who came to him.

There was an energy field that arose, and out of this energy field, the answers came. Sometimes they came through him. Sometimes they came through the people who came to him.

Another interesting thing he said, that's not reported in Plato, but written by another disciple of his called Xenophon, and he said that Socrates frequently pointed out that he received counsel from a divine voice. And again, that's something that the Western rationalists try to ignore. To them, Plato is the absolutely clear, rational, analytical, conceptual thinker.

And they don't see, because they don't know that dimension within themselves, they don't see the depths out of which his thinking actually came. So he said frequently, as reported by Xenophon, that he received guidance from a divine voice, Socrates. Not in

the sense, one doesn't get the sense that some entity spoke through him, but obviously he was referring to inspiration from a dimension within him that was beyond thinking, beyond conceptualization, beyond the rational thought.

So the impression we get of Socrates is really we see half the story. We see only the upper half of the iceberg. Well, the iceberg actually is, you see far less than half of it.

You see only a tiny fraction of it. And that was when we, when these things are taught at universities and so on. The more important dimension is actually completely missed.

They only look at the upper. What's he saying? But where did all that come from?

What was the state of consciousness out of which such a creative teaching, such creative thinking could arise? And so it is that most, these dimensions, the dimension of conceptualization, of thinking is in everyone, but the dimension of non-conceptual intelligence is also in everyone. But in the same way that we only see one half of the whole or less than one half of the whole when we look at Socrates through the eyes of Plato and through the eyes of Western interpreters, in the same way most humans go through life only knowing themselves and knowing the world in one dimension.

And that's the, we could call that the dimension of form. And so let's bring it now after having gone to Greece, let's bring it to a very immediately verifiable place here and now. As you sit here, you are aware of yourself as a form identity, obviously, because you are aware of your body, which is a physical form.

You are aware of, although you may not remember your past, you have vaguely, you know that you have a past, you have a name, you have an address, and you have a life situation that may not be happening right here now unless you're thinking about it, but you have a life situation, your whole personal past is there, and you have thoughts going through your head, perhaps, and this is what most people identify with and know, that's all they know. They know themselves as that form-based entity.

And what else is there? There is that in you which is continuously overlooked because the world of form, which includes thinking, thoughts that continuously arise, the world of form has such a hypnotic pull, it's so seductive that you follow it, first you have the senses, the outer senses, but more importantly, you have the seduction of continuously arising interpretations of what the sense is, the sensory input. If you look at your consciousness, your state of consciousness, the sensory input plays a relatively small part in what goes on in your mind.

A much greater part of what goes on in your mind is either an interpretation of the sensory input that's immediately interpreted through the conditioning of your mind, the filter, or it is ignored completely and you are totally absorbed in the stream of thinking, in other words, totally unaware of your surroundings because you're absorbed in the

seduction of thoughts arising and drawing in the totality of your attention, your consciousness, and so you become an entity that is entirely, consists entirely of thought, the me, and you know no other dimension in you. That's all, and anybody else who says even, if you're totally identified with that, even the suggestion that there may be another dimension would immediately be ridiculed or the mind-made entity feel threatened by it. That's why in many publications, the slightest hint of spirituality must be ridiculed.

The Mormons, they talk about spirituality, but they have to bring in something that makes it a little bit ridiculous. New York Times, for example, and Time magazine, and many, almost every, not all, but there are some exceptions, but that's not anybody's fault. It's the mind-based entity that knows only form.

It knows only thought, and that's a dreadful limitation of it reduces your life to something very small. Really, you live in a box, in a little box in your head that you cannot step beyond the conditioning of your mind, and every thought that comes immediately grabs you and you go into it, and so many people are hardly aware of what the world around them, and if they are aware, they immediately judge it. And so you can see people walking through the forest, walking along a beach.

Even they're only peripherally aware for brief moments, they say, oh, lovely, and then they go back into, hmm. Oh, look at that, it's a lovely sunset, isn't it? And so the degree to which humans are absent from life, which is, of course, here and now, the present moment, that's where life is, nowhere else, the degree to which humans are absent from life varies from person to person, but many humans these days are extremely absent so that they don't actually experience life as such.

Their entire life consists of their life situation, which is the story in the head, and that's what absorbs their attention. That's the only thing that matters. So you only know form.

External forms that you identify with, they're all translated, of course, into mental forms. Every external form that you identify with, possessions or other people's opinions or status or prestige or success or failure, they're all ideas. Even your house is an idea, basically.

When you identify with it, my house becomes an idea in your head. It's not the house, it's the idea that you identify with rather than the house that you identify with. The idea of my house, which becomes, so the idea, of course, is a thought.

And the thought becomes imbued with self because you identify with it, and there you have the condition that the Buddha talks about as ignorance leading to suffering. Because if you only know that and you don't know the, what in Buddhism is sometimes called the emptiness, the formless dimension to who you are, then your life is a succession of problems, frustrations, troubles. One damn thing after another.

And if nothing is going wrong at this moment around you, your mind is rehearsing the next thing that's going to go wrong. Well, not just one, the next succession of things that may and probably will go wrong because you know from your past that things go wrong. And so that's the dreadful condition of ignorance.

Ignorance doesn't mean you're lacking in education. You can be highly educated and totally ignorant in spiritual terms, in transcendent terms, totally ignorant because you're totally identified with your mind. In fact, if you are highly educated, the likelihood is much greater that you are totally ignorant because then you are more identified even with your mind.

And so then how do we realize, experience for ourselves the transcendent dimension within, that is that which goes beyond form, that which goes beyond thought? In order to realize that which goes beyond thought, we could say that, well, thought needs to come to a, needs to cease, to come to a stop for a little while. For example, now, the cessation of thinking in which there seems to be nothing but it's not really nothing.

It's no thing, yes, because it's no form. There's just something that we cannot really conceptualize because the moment we talk about it, we make it into something. That's the famous phrase, first sentence in the Tao Te Ching.

If it can be named, it's not the true Tao because the Tao is the formless that pervades the world of form. So the cessation of thinking is really where the dimension of the formless in you opens up. And this teaching and any true spiritual teaching, no matter what terms they use to point to it, is about this.

It's about the opening up in yourself of that spaciousness that is formless consciousness. I'm already using too many terms because then the mind says, ah, now I know what it is. It's formless consciousness, which, of course, that's another concept.

So it's not to be used as an explanation, but to be used as a signpost. Formless consciousness points to that which cannot be named. So if I say formless consciousness, don't be like a dog that looks at your finger.

But if I say formless consciousness, you have to look where there's nothing in you. Now the advanced, those of you who are advanced spiritually, are able to go into that dimension of not thinking just like that. When almost, when you want to, you go, it's nothing to think about, so I want to think.

And you can actually, as you sat here, for example, waiting for the session to start, and I sat in the green room waiting to come in here, was I sitting there as a form identity or was I sitting there as a formless presence? And when you were waiting here, were you sitting here as that form identity, thinking about your life this morning? When is he going to come?

What's this? What do these people look like? Are they more advanced than me?

Are they, what else? Or thinking about the problems. I shouldn't have come.

Why did I come? What about tomorrow when I'll have to deal with those? Then you sit here as a form identity.

Why is it taking so long? It's already five past. Why isn't he here yet?

Or were you sitting here as just a simple formless presence with no judgment, allowing what is to be, allowing this moment to be? Now, that is interesting. When thinking ceases and there is that spacious presence, then you are, of course, the implication is, of course, that whatever is, you're allowing it to be as it is.

That is the result of not thinking, but it can also be a practice that takes you into not thinking as a conscious practice. If you're not yet able to simply go into the spaciousness of presence, then you can use the spiritual practice of becoming friendly, as I sometimes put it, becoming friendly with the present moment. In other words, whatever is the case at this moment, you're completely at one with that.

You don't oppose it internally. That, as a practice, takes you also into, what opens up then is spaciousness inside you if you use that as a practice. And it's a beautiful practice, allowing life to be as it is at this moment.

Why should I allow? Well, because it already is. And if you see then, thinking is not busy anymore because most of the time you're denying what is or running away from what is, and that's all the thought activity.

So you have to see for yourself whether you're able to embody that state of no thought simply by saying, right, this is actually much more, you feel much more alive when you're not interpreting continuously than when you interpret. An enormous freedom comes in. Suddenly the box that you were trapped in, that the majority of humans are still trapped in, the box through which they peep through little holes into, suddenly that opens up and you're out of the box.

And that is the state that Socrates referred to when he said, I am the only one who knows that he knows nothing. Implying, of course, that everybody else also knows nothing, but they don't know that. They believe in every thought that comes into their head.

And so they are full of knowledge, which means accumulated concepts, which means accumulated thought forms in the head, and through that they judge life and other people and so on, and it creates a dreadful reality because you don't have, it's not the whole, it's a partial, very partial fragment what you are aware of. So when you judge another human, for example, and to judge means to equate somebody's unconscious

behavior, stupidity, with who they are. When you judge another human and talk about them in negative terms and so on, you miss, again, you miss the vital dimension in that other human being, which is the formless.

We could say the divine. And when you miss it in another, you miss it in yourself because you get drawn into believing in judgments, which are thought forms. So you are trapped in your own thought forms.

You're trapping the other person in your thought forms, but primarily you are trapping yourself in your own thought forms. So one could say consciousness becomes imprisoned in form, and that is the ignorance which creates suffering for yourself, and then you inflict suffering on others. So the vital practice is to become aware of that in you that has nothing to do with any form, that is presence itself, spaciousness.

Stillness. Now stillness doesn't mean you need silence outside you. You can have a lot of noise around you and be completely still.

You don't need silence to be still. In fact, it is a wonderful thing when, let's say, there are disturbing noises around you, and in our civilization, there's an enormous amount of noise that we produce. It's almost as if we could not stand silence.

So every moment needs to be filled up with some kind of noise, and then again, that's simply an externalization of what happens in the human mind, which has become so identified with the voice in the head, the continuous noise of thinking, it cannot tolerate silence. So it must be externally manifested as, okay, what can we invent to create more noise? It's not enough that the machines are noisy, but no, we need to create.

Very hard to find a restaurant these days that's not noisy. That's simply an externalization of an inner state. But when you allow what is to be, because you happen to be in a restaurant that's noisy, you can either walk out, but you've already ordered, you're hungry, and you know that the next one is going to be just as noisy.

And so there you are, and say, I can't sit here in this noise. I don't want to be here. What's that thoughts arising in your head?

I can't stand this. Why do I have to? Or you can say, okay, my choice is to be here.

I've ordered the soup already. Can I allow this moment to be as it is because it is? And when you ask yourself that question, and after that question, if it works as it should or could, if it works, after you're asking, can I allow this moment to be as it is, you enter the state of no thought.

And you suddenly realize all the thoughts that were telling you, this is dreadful, I can't stand this, they were just thoughts. But you believed in them. While you believed in them, they had you in their grip.

And if you ask, can I allow this moment to be as it is, suddenly the space opens up. You become, one could almost say you become the space in which whatever is happening at this moment unfolds. And so you discover the stillness inside you that has nothing to do with external conditions.

And then you're in the same inner state in whether you're in the forest, beautiful, surrounded by beautiful nature. Oh, I can really be still here. And you can be, your senses are alert to all the beauty around you.

And as you realize that the stillness in you is actually always there underneath the thinking, you can be then an hour later in the shopping mall, just before Christmas, when they play these dreadful songs again every year, I have to listen to this dreadful stuff, all corny, and they start playing it six weeks, seven weeks before Christmas, they start playing that already. I can't stand this, get me out of here. And then say, okay, is that true?

Can I really not stand it? Or can I allow this moment to be as it is? Of course, another choice you always have is you can walk out.

But then you have to allow that moment because in the next moment you're in the traffic and it's cold. So wherever you can't escape, eventually you always get to the point, can I allow this moment to be as it is? And say, yeah.

And then you can actually enjoy the shopping mall as a manifestation of the incredible play of life forms that is taking place on this planet, the multiplicity of life forms, not the humans that run around. And you look, before you were judging them, say, look how these stupid people, they're doing their Christmas, what are they doing? It's so pointless.

On its own level, it may be true, but it's a fragmentary truth. It's a fragment of the truth. It's not the whole.

So it's not entirely wrong to say that they're engaged in totally pointless activities. Of course, they're totally identified with form and so on and so on. We know, so life becomes pointless.

We know all that. So there is a relative truth to some of the judgments of the mind, but it's not the whole. But when you relinquish the judgments of the mind and allow this moment to be, then suddenly it's actually, you see manifestations of life, which is also the shopping mall.

So there are the human beings. Some are nervous, some are, you just observe. Some are nervous, some are, ah.

And so, and then you see all the things that the humans have made, brought into existence. All the things. Thousands of things everywhere.

Things, things. Wherever you look, ah. But, and again, you now look very differently at this.

You enjoy. Actually, when you allow, you enjoy the multiplicity of things too. And you can walk and look.

So you're enjoying life as it unfolds in this moment. That is what the universe has brought into existence at this moment. And you allow.

And then you realize you are actually still. You have the same stillness inside you that you had when you were in the forest an hour ago. And so that's the entry point into the state of the formless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the essence is always, of course, in the present moment.

And your relationship, so to speak, your relationship with the present moment determines whether you are trapped in form or whether the present, or whether something opens up there for you. So there's always, the present moment is always, it can be a closed door. You want to get somewhere else.

Or suddenly it can open up whatever arises in this moment. Whatever form arises in this moment, it can be something that you judge as being not enough or undesirable, not fulfilling, or it can be something that becomes an opening. And so we have shopping malls, we have the forest.

We also have more challenging situations sometimes than shopping malls. Shopping malls are not that challenging, but there are other situations in life that present a challenge, a difficulty, and that usually means something in the world of form is becoming shaky in your life. That could be, for example, when your company is not doing well and you think you might be losing your job.

So something in the world of form is no longer solid. Or your pension plan, maybe it's not going to survive by the time you retire. It looked so solid, this form in your life, and now it's shaky.

And then it can happen that in one person's life, at one particular time, several things start shaking, being shaky at the same time. Your marriage, your mortgage, and it can happen that the same similar thing can happen to a million people all at the same time. That sometimes happens, but that doesn't really matter because it really happens to one person.

It's one person who has to deal with it, whether this one person is multiplied a million times or whether it's just your particular life situation. It doesn't really matter. The individual still has to deal with it.

And you become aware that, yes, the world of form is not as solid as it looked before.

And that when you, again, that can create an incredible amount of fear. Or it can, you can ask the same question, bring your attention to this moment.

Okay, now what is shaky about this moment? My job? No, I don't feel anything shaking right now.

My mortgage? At this moment, no, but it's not a problem at this moment, is it? The job, the mortgage, the marriage that may not survive this, that my pension plan that just collapsed.

What am I going to live on the last 20 years of my life? Is that a problem? No, it's not a problem at this moment.

It may become a problem at some other point, which of course will again be this moment. And then you have to ask yourself again, is it a problem at this moment? If you go into this moment deeply enough, also that which is beyond form opens up.

Again, when your life becomes problematic, past, future, past is unsatisfying, didn't go as it should have gone. The future is threatening. And so you live between the unsatisfying past that didn't quite work out as it was supposed to and the threatening future, you move.

Dreadful existence. And then imagine your whole life, which becomes of course accentuated when certain periods, when the challenges arise, it becomes even more so than the normal state of it's always there, but when things get difficult, it's much more threatening and the past seems much more unsatisfying when everything I worked for in the past 30 years is collapsing. And there's an incredible opportunity if you can use that moment and say, okay, bring your attention to this moment.

And then you go deeply into first the surface of this moment, which is your breathing and you're perceiving, no problem. You're either standing, sitting or lying somewhere. You look around, there's the multiplicity of life forms around you, wherever you are, even in your room, there are objects.

You may look out of the window, there's a sky or wherever you are, you look around and then you become aware of the inner space, the space of consciousness itself. Otherwise you couldn't be perceiving anything, which is the stillness, which feels incredibly alive. And that is knowing yourself as that essence is true happiness, if we even want to use the word happiness.

And then one could say, when you know yourself as that simple, pure essence of just consciousness or awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it, you know yourself as that, that is ananda, bliss, happiness, true fulfillment. And you're happy for no reason, simply because you're happy simply because it arises out of being. So when you know that you are, I am, which is presence itself, formless, that is happiness, that is ananda,

that is the bliss of being.

And there's no external reason. In fact, often it comes to people when externally things are collapsing, dissolving, shaky, and then suddenly you go deeper. Ah.

And in that, you are, the person that you still are on the level of form has receded and something else has come into this dimension, one could almost say, where the person has become an opening for presence or divine presence, the presence of God, you could say. And that is, you're then free of the burden of the person or personality, which, of course, can still operate, will still operate, but now there is the possibility for you to live in the two dimensions, as a person and as formless presence. And from then onwards, nothing in the world of form is any longer dreadfully threatening and nothing in the world of form is dreadfully serious.

And even if something drastic happens on the level of form, people dying around you or your own death approaching, yes, from a fragmentary perspective, it is still tragic, number of people dying in an accident or in a terrorist attack or whatever it is. Yes, it is tragic, but if you are from a holistic perspective, it is not absolutely tragic because you realize the truth of that which is beyond death. Not only in yourself, but also, of course, in every being.

You realize the truth of, as in Buddhism, it's sometimes called the deathless, that which is beyond death. I love these Buddhist terms because they just deny the world of form without giving you any form to believe in. It's not as inspiring, of course, as Jesus saying eternal life.

It's the same. He points to the same thing. The danger with eternal life is that you can completely misinterpret it, start believing in it as if it were a future event and believing that it's about life going on and on and on and on.

Of course, eternal doesn't mean it goes on and on and on. That would be dreadful. Even paradise would become dreadful.

How many years have you been here? 58,300. Of course, eternal is timeless.

Time doesn't come in anymore. The nature of the formless dimension in you is it is beyond time. In that sense, it is eternal.

So eternal life can be misinterpreted and has been, of course. The deathless, the Buddhist term, pointing to the same thing or no thing, is more difficult to misinterpret or believe in. I believe in eternal life.

Yeah, okay. I believe in the deathless, or even more, another Buddhist term, I believe in emptiness. That's not very inspiring, is it?

But the kingdom of heaven, again, pointing to the same thing or no thing, again, you can easily misinterpret it, but it's more inspiring. Ah, kingdom of heaven. When is it going to come?

They have been asking that for 2,000 years. When is it going to come? It even says in the New Testament, which the teaching of Jesus has become distorted in many ways, but he says very clearly, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be observed.

It says literally. And then he adds, you can't say, ah, there it is, or look over here. He already said it.

And then for 2,000 years, they think it's going to come with signs to be observed. So he gave you an inspiring thing to kingdom of heaven, and he gave you a warning at the same time. He says it's not going to come as if it were here or there.

That's not, and it's not, it is within you. Truly, I tell you that. When he says that, it means you really have to listen.

And so if, if even you have 10% of your life, to put it like that, you can't really quantify, but let's say if you have 10% of your life of formless presence, that already would be an enormous improvement in the quality of your life, your life experience. But more than that is even better. If you can have half, half, that's an amazing thing, that half of your waking life is spent in just being present, being the formless presence rather than being the person.

And then gradually also what can happen is not necessarily an absolute division between formless presence and being identified with form. In other words, losing yourself completely into identification with thinking and reacting and so on. What happens is the two begin to come together so that even while you are thinking, there is still a spaciousness in your thinking and in between your thoughts, which enables you not to identify with every thought that comes.

You can still be the spaciousness even while you're thinking. So thinking becomes interspersed with spaciousness. So before you had, let's say, every finger of my hand is a thought.

Before you had one thought after another, there's nothing, there's no space at all. What about this here? But on the other hand, when you think about this, what about tomorrow?

What he said to me, I'll never forgive him for that. And then suddenly you have that. Again, yes, you still have these thoughts, but you have a spaciousness in between them, so to speak.

And so from that spaciousness, you can be aware of the kinds of thoughts that arise. So

you are still basically rooted in the spaciousness, the formlessness, even though thoughts are happening. And it may even happen that some old thoughts still come, old patterns, because they've been around for 20, 30, 40 years, and you still, certain thoughts that you've been thinking for those many years still habitually arise, but there's a change.

They no longer possess you completely. You're not totally drawn into them anymore, and gradually they lose their ability to make you unhappy, because the unhappiness that is many people's daily existence really consists of, and comes down to, identification with thoughts that are telling them something. And these thoughts make you very unhappy.

Losing your job cannot make you unhappy, but if you start thinking about it, how dreadful it is, all kinds of judgment arising, the futility of your whole life, the futility of the past 30 years, the whole meaninglessness of it, the likelihood that you will never get a job again, and if you do get a job, you're going to pay much less than you earned before, and you probably won't be able to pay your mortgage.

That makes you unhappy. But the loss of the job is the loss of the job, and here you are. You can take action, if possible, see if there is another job, and while you take action, you can be spacious and present.

There's no unhappiness in losing your job. There's the unhappiness in thinking about it and deriving an identity from that, a very unpleasant identity. When you have a great job and all is going well, and you just got your bonus, if you're working on Wall Street, you just got your annual bonus of \$10 million, because you sold many of these things that I can't pronounce that are going to collapse, of course, in two years' time, but that doesn't matter.

You sold these, and then you can really, the identification with form for a little while seems to satisfy you until that becomes shaky, as it will, a reform sooner or later. Either your company will collapse, or the whole economy will collapse, or you collapse. And then the identification with form becomes unsatisfying and a source of unhappiness.

But the amazing thing is to see what makes you unhappy is your mental interpretations. Many philosophers said that. It's often mentioned in ancient philosophy.

They already saw that truth, that the unhappiness is in your mental judgments or interpretations, not in the situation. And so that becomes enormously liberating to realize. So you allow the situation to be as it is, go deeply into the present moment where there is no problem, and you connect with the, as I call it sometimes, non-conceptual intelligence.

Non-conceptual means formless intelligence, which cannot be measured in IQ tests. There's no IQ test that can measure your formless intelligence. IQ test measures how

you can manipulate certain conceptual or visual forms.

And that intelligence also often brings up new insights and ideas. So instead of going into thought activity and allow it to make you unhappy, let's stay with losing your job, instead of going in there for the next few years or the rest of your life and thinking about how unfair the whole thing is. And you get angry if you believe in God, you get angry with God.

If you don't believe in God, you get angry with everybody else, or life in general. And you become bitter and cynical and hard, and you already know how dreadful, your mind is full of knowledge, of answers, trapped in form without even knowing it, very unhappy. And so go into the present moment, allow this moment to be as it is.

And if thoughts still arise, I'm a failure. My last 30 years have been in vain. It's a thought.

And there you have a spaciousness after the thought. In that spaciousness, you're not a failure at all. You are aware, presence, alive, blissful, one could almost say.

You're undoubtedly not a failure here. You're only a failure in the thought. And then comes the next thought.

What am I going to live on? Okay. And you might follow it for a minute or two or three or five, but not for days and weeks.

And then comes again the spaciousness. You're living now, aren't you? You're breathing now.

You even have enough food perhaps, even if it's only baked beans. Well, that's what I lived on for a few years. That was in England.

Heinz baked beans. Now, that could have been very unhappy if I had had thoughts that I believed in that said at my age, I'm in my 30s, and I'm still living on baked beans. And look at the people who were at university with me.

They're in BMWs now. But thoughts like that didn't really arise anymore. That was lucky.

So I was very happy with the baked beans, and I'm happy now that I'm not eating baked beans but something else. So this is what I've been reduced to, the baked beans. And then there comes a space.

Is that so bad? No. It's fine.

Because there's more. They don't even taste that bad, and I feel there's an aliveness that I can sense that has nothing to do with the baked beans. So thoughts get interspersed with space and then loses the power to make you unhappy, and gradually even the old thought patterns begin to subside, those old judgments about yourself,

other people in your life, what they did to you, things that can be very strong lodged inside you with an enormous emotional charge can be so strong that at the thought of one particular person in your head can transform your entire state of consciousness, your ex-husband or your first husband, your second wife, what she did to me, what he did, just one thought can pull you. And again, if you have a little, a nod in you that is enormously charged with old emotion, pain, body, as I call it, then presence is required so that you can be, you can allow that emotion to be there, but still have the awareness around it. And it helps to be here, sitting here, being continuously pointed towards that dimension within yourself so that when the big challenges come, there's enough presence so that it doesn't, the presence in you or the spaciousness does not become completely obscured.

And then even a heavy old emotion, when it's the moment you can feel it, you can say, oh, that is, can I allow this to be as it is? The thunderstorm inside me, well, you can allow the external thunderstorm to be, and you can allow the inner thunderstorm to be, and then there's space around it. You can feel this anger still there, but you detach the anger from thoughts so that your thoughts are not feeling the anger.

You just feel the anger now. And so there's space around it, awareness around it, and then it gets gradually transmuted. So spacious living, it's sometimes, yes, sometimes you may, you will experience pure presence in your life, and it's beautiful when that happens, and those time periods will gradually become longer.

Pure presence when you're with another human being, the ability to listen in pure presence, the ability to look in pure presence without judgments, without concepts. So not knowing, the same place that Socrates talked about, the place of presence is the state of not knowing and becoming comfortable with not knowing and not judging. And that's a wonderful thing if you can do that with other human beings while you are with other humans or meet other human beings.

You don't need to judge them or interpret them. All situations that arise in your life, you don't need to judge it or interpret it. It is as it is at this moment.

And then if action is possible out of that deeper intelligence that immediately opens up when you accept this moment, action arises. If no action is possible, there's simply a background of peace. Even in this inner situation that may be difficult or unpleasant.

So moments of not, at first moments of pure presence, that's beautiful already. When you're not challenged, contemplating an object, a flower, how the light reflects off the table, people around you, life forms, all temporary life forms like clouds. Clouds don't last for very long in the form they have now.

Five minutes later, you don't recognize the cloud or it's dissolved into something else. With humans, it lasts a little bit longer, a few years, and then you don't recognize them

anymore and then they're gone. So it's temporary forms continuously, and that's not dreadful that forms continuously dissolve, but there's something that pervades this world of form that is eternal and timeless.

Life itself, you could call it, consciousness, God. So you have, you could say, three states of consciousness. These are all temporary things, there's no absolute judgment, truth here.

It's a way of looking, no more. Three states of consciousness. One is, yes, the state of ignorance, totally identified with every thought that arises.

Then space begins to arise in your life. Then you have thinking interspersed with space, which in other words, awareness is present or awareness is felt in the background of your life, even while thinking happens, even while old thoughts happen. But the nature of your thinking then already begins to change because very dysfunctional thinking, when there is an awareness there, begins to change.

But dysfunctional thinking means thinking that creates imaginary problems, makes you unhappy and makes others unhappy. If your thinking makes you unhappy, you can almost be certain that you are making other people around you also unhappy. And they do it to themselves and to you.

That's called normal relationships. So you have complete identification with thinking, the state of ignorance, you have thinking interspersed with space or awareness and a continuing sense of awareness in the background, even while your mind is doing what it's doing. And then you have the third, spaces of pure presence when there is virtually no thinking or just little fragments of thoughts that come like little puffs of clouds and dissolve.

But most of it is like a huge blue sky and occasionally you have a little puffy cloud that suddenly rises in the blue sky and dissolves. And another one little comes up and dissolves. But mostly the sky is clear.

And that is enormous. When that comes into your life, that is, well, liberation, that is salvation, that is awakening, that is, you're free. And this is, you can, sometimes people ask me, is that something that we can make happen or is it something that we just have to hope that it's going to happen?

It's not going to happen. It's happening now. Happening is even the wrong word because happening is something to do with the world of form.

Something, form arises or dissolves or it does something to another form. You can certainly invite it. Let's put it like this.

You can invite presence into your life. Again, I gave you the example of you sitting here

before we started and me sitting in the green room. Now, I don't know whether you were sitting here as mainly, some of you probably were sitting here as mainly presence, embodied presence, and others perhaps were there more as a person with thoughts and judgments and concerns and likes and dislikes, all kinds of things, a person, normal person.

And I was sitting in the green room. Now, was I a person or presence? Now, imagine a person sitting in the green room thinking, what am I going to talk about?

What do they expect? I have to talk for another hour and a half or whatever it is and is it going to work out? Are they going to be inspiring?

Is the inspiration going to be there? I'm supposed to be a great spiritual teacher? That's what people, they expect something of me, so I better deliver.

If I don't, then the whole thing is not going to work anymore and they're going to dislike me. That would be a person thinking, can I live up to what they expect of me? That would be a dreadful state, having to sit there.

So it just wouldn't work. It would be awful. So the only choice then is to be there as a simple, aware presence.

And there's no thought is required for that. I don't need to know beforehand. I need to be comfortable with not knowing.

Socrates again, I need to be comfortable with its place of no thought. Oh, and it is wonderfully comfortable. And you're a simple presence.

You're not a spiritual teacher. You can't be a spiritual teacher when you think of yourself as a spiritual teacher. It's only when you know your formless, your essential formlessness, then perhaps teaching can come through you into the world of form.

Inspired thoughts can come out of the space of no thought. And it's a wonderful space to be and there's no fear there because there's only this, only there's the sense perceptions, but they're not significant. Well, there's a rule, there's this, there's that.

And then there's an intense awareness there, just a field of awareness. There's no person. It's just a field of awareness.

There's no conceptual identity anymore. It's just an aware presence. And that's a wonderful, powerful state that I recommend highly.

And whatever forms you have in your life because you interact with the world of form here in the external, that if you embody more and more that aware presence rather than coming as a little person, then you will see how that it makes an enormous difference to the effect that you have on the world around you, but not you as a person, but the power

that flows through you into this world of form which then transforms even the world of form. Not that the forms will become permanent.

No, it still applies that all forms are temporary and dissolve and come and go. It doesn't make the forms satisfying. There's no ultimate satisfaction in any form in your life, any thought form, any physical form.

It cannot give you satisfaction, nor are you looking for it because the satisfaction is already in the presence, in your very presence. That is satisfying. And then, as I sometimes put it, the world of form suddenly becomes satisfying, but only because you are not looking for satisfaction in the forms.

It's already in you as in the being that you are. That is the satisfaction, that which is satisfying. And then the forms are actually enjoyable.

Every form. You don't need to necessarily have certain forms. You can, but you don't need to have.

You can enjoy without needing to say, this is mine, but occasionally you might want to buy something. There's nothing wrong with that, knowing that, of course, eventually either it's going to break or your body goes before it goes or somebody steals it or you drop it or you give it away. But you enjoy things around you or you may be given something while it lasts.

You never, the whole sense of ownership also changes. As a feeling of mine, this is mine, changes, and you don't really get that anymore. You can have something and enjoy its presence here, an object, but that feeling of attachment to it and seeking, I can't let go of that.

That isn't there anymore. So you can enjoy things without looking to them for some kind of self, self-fulfillment, self-reference, me and mine. So it's natural that you will still occasionally, yes, you buy things, but you will probably accumulate fewer things than in the ignorant state where you would look for satisfaction partly through accumulating things for other people it's something else, but they're all looking in some dimension or form.

So living with something and just, you look after it, as it says in one ad for an expensive watch, you never actually own this watch, it says. The implication is it will outlive you. You never actually own it, you just look after it for the next generation, that's their slogan.

But I love the first part especially because the next generation isn't going to own it either. And it might even break before they get it. But you never actually own this watch, there's a little bit of spiritual truth in there.

Now often you don't know whether there has been attachment until you lose it. Because it's easy to deceive yourself and then say, I'm not attached to anything in my life anymore. And then somebody scratches your car, or the car is gone when you go to the parking lot.

And that's the moment of truth. That tells you whether you were attached or not attached. So this is a new way to live.

And the whole purpose of your existence on this planet in this form, temporary form, is for this consciousness to come through you. So in other words, the evolution is, the goal of evolution is awakening. I know that from myself.

Many universal answers, you just have to look at yourself to see that you know the purpose of suffering, because you can look back on your own suffering. What is the role of suffering in human existence? Just look at your own life and see your own past suffering, where it has brought you, and so on.

Well, the answers you can find, the universal questions, if you look deeply within, you can find the answers within you. And so the universe is awakening. And it's awakening here where we are through the human form, which is not separate from all other life forms.

It's awakening here. Where is it all going? I don't know.

You can't possibly conceive. It would be absurd. It would be like a tiny bacteria trying to understand, let's say a bacteria in your body trying to understand who you are.

So you can't. You don't even need to. We don't need a vast conceptual understanding of the purpose of the universe.

All we need is the awakening of consciousness. And for many people, that's because they've been suffering. That provided the motivation for many of you to be here.

Because if all had been going well and all the forms in your life have been so satisfying, what would you want to do with spiritual awakening? What's the point in that? Just enjoy the next meal.

Enjoy your Christmas presents. Enjoy whatever the next item you're going to buy. Enjoy the next sexual act.

Enjoy the next sense pleasure. Enjoy the next drug. Take it all in.

The next affair that you have with somebody, the excitement of it. Isn't it all great? Well, unfortunately, that's not quite how it is.

There's always another side to every enjoyment, and that side looks very different. Oh,

my God.

[Speaker 5] (3:59:04 - 3:59:08)

Oh, no.

[Speaker 1] (3:59:09 - 4:03:39)

Oh, my God. I feel sick. So it's wonderful if we can be grateful for what is.

We can be grateful for also even for what was. Your past that has brought you to this point, it means, well, that looks like a success story. If your past has brought you to spiritual awakening, well, that looks like a huge success.

And you might have lost your job. You might have done the wrong thing. Maybe you made one mistake after another, perhaps, some of you, or many mistakes, one wrong choice and another wrong choice.

Why did I get together with that person? That was a dreadful mistake. I should never have taken that job.

And then that was wrong. Why did I do that for 10 years? That was so pointless.

Okay, but it suddenly, all that which didn't make sense, retrospectively, suddenly seems to make sense because it's taken you to, oh. So the chaos of your past, and I'm talking about that because my past is a bit like that. One mistake after another, why?

One failure and another failure and not... Up to the age of 50, almost, a failure in the eyes of the world. And then suddenly a success.

Laughter But it wasn't a failure, of course, and I didn't see it as a failure. I was a failure up to the age of 29 before the awakening happened. That was a dreadful thing.

And after that, there was no conceptual identity, particularly. And so every present moment was actually basically fine. Without carrying the burden of a conceptual identity, the present moment is actually okay.

There may be some discomfort in it sometimes, but okay. But that's how it is. It's basically still okay.

For a while, when I was going through the awakening, I lived in a bed-sitter. Bed-sitter is where you have a room where you cook and sleep and sit. A bed-sitter.

It doesn't have a bathroom, so you have to share the bathroom with other bed-sitters. So my particular... The toilet had to be shared with six other bed-sitters.

And sometimes in the morning, you have to line up to wait to go to the loo. And that was

just what was. It was, yes, some discomfort, leading occasionally to constipation, but...

And there wasn't much. You had only a little stove with two little rings, so you couldn't do much cooking, but it worked with the baked beans. LAUGHTER So the present moment was basically fine.

Yes, there could be more comfort and so on, yes, but it's basically fine. There was aliveness, beauty outside. There was the sky, there were trees, a couple of potted plants.

There was the city, walking around the city, life.

[Speaker 5] (4:03:40 - 4:03:40)

It's fine.

[Speaker 1] (4:03:40 - 4:58:55)

Without the burden of a conceptual identity, the me with its problems and its past and its future, it's basically fine. But it could have been dreadful. And before the awakening happened, it was very unpleasant, very dreadful.

So go into the present moment, and sometimes people ask me, what would you say to a person who actually is starving, they don't have enough food? Okay, I don't know. You have to...

I never was actually starving, because I always had baked beans and bread, toast, baked beans on toast. So you can have all kinds of hypothetical situations. Yes, there are people who are starving.

It is also a fact that there are, in some third world countries, where people have very little, or they struggle to survive. Every human being has their own challenges and their own past, and every human being is only a tiny aspect or fragment of the totality of human awakening. There is no absolute separate reality to any human being.

Any human being is a temporary manifestation in form of that timeless consciousness that is awakening here. So there's no... We look at a human being and say, oh, this person's life is so terrible, it's not, it's all, it is, it is a cell, every human is a cell in the totality.

And every cell has its own particular path of awakening. So in some, I have seen people in third world countries that look totally at peace, and they were sitting begging by the side of the road, and they looked much more peaceful, not all, some, than the tourists who were walking past, who were wealthy tourists. They were...

And you see in India sometimes, occasionally you see some people who are maybe have only one leg and sitting by the side of the road and completely peaceful. Thank you. So

in some of those, this transformation has also happened.

They've never heard perhaps of anything spiritual. They've never gone to a spiritual talk. They've never read a spiritual book.

That wasn't their path. But their path was something else. And some of them, through the extremely unsatisfying nature of the forms around them, miraculously realized that which is beyond form.

And so then they start... And many of them, they couldn't put it into words. They're just at peace and present, and they look at you.

And some of them, actually, particularly in a place like India, which has a spiritual tradition going back thousands of years, some of them became spiritual gurus or teachers, whether they spoke or not. You didn't have to speak. You could just sit there, and people would see the presence in them and give them food.

And then two more people would sit around them, look at them, trying to get a more picture of their presence. And then gradually, before you know it, there's an ashram. And that person around somebody who has no conceptual identity whatsoever, just pure presence.

That's beautiful. In the West, this is not how it works in the West. It's very different.

But so it's many different ways in which awakening happens on this planet. And there's only one consciousness. There's only the one manifesting as the many, the unmanifested, timeless one coming through and manifesting in this dimension.

Who knows where it's all going? We don't need to know that, but it's a beautiful process. The awakening of the universe in this dimension, in the timeless, it's already awake.

Everything has already happened or everything is continuously happening as one. It's only in this world that we experience the differentiated world of form. There seems to be past, future, and evolution.

So you are becoming gradually or suddenly free of this dreadful burden of carrying a conceptual identity and knowing nothing else. And then a time comes when you use as much, sorry, as little of your conceptual identity as is possible in daily life. That's the more advanced stage.

In other words, when people ask you about yourself, you can still answer. You can say, this is where I live. What do you do for a living?

I don't answer when people ask me, what do you do for a living? I don't say, I am the formless one incarnating. It confuses people.

So you keep it simple. I'm a writer. Oh, okay.

What do you write? Spirituality. Oh, okay.

And then you can talk about where you're from, where have you lived? That's fine. It's your concepts.

What about your parents? Okay, that's, yeah. You can use the conceptual identity when it's needed.

Without believing that it's terribly important. And when you're alone, you certainly don't need it. Reference to tell you who you are.

You don't need the concepts to tell you who you are. You are life. You are consciousness.

That's all you need to, and you don't know that conceptually. You know that directly, immediately. Nationalities and all those things, collective identities.

Yes, when somebody asks, yeah, that's me. I'm such and such nationality, but you're not really. Race also doesn't, it's just the body, appearance of the body.

Okay. Welcome to our private seminar. I'm talking about spiritual awakening in daily life.

And some people may not be quite sure what the term spiritual awakening even means. Or they may have strange ideas in their head of what spiritual is, what is spiritual, and what is awakening. And instead of defining right now, I'm just going to talk about spiritual awakening in daily life.

And as I talk, what spiritual means and what awakening means will hopefully emerge while we talk. So instead of defining beforehand what these things are, because although this is not a talk on philosophy, so we're not here to define terms. It's an experiential thing.

It's not information-based. We're here to experience something and then to bring that into daily life, live it in our daily existence. Everybody has done some traveling and sightseeing, visited unfamiliar places, European cathedrals perhaps, or the pyramids in Egypt, or Machu Picchu, Stonehenge in England, whatever it may be.

And it's often an interesting experience for me to go into a place and walk around doing some sightseeing. Let's say it's a cathedral, an ancient cathedral in Europe, and you walk in there, and usually you have little groups of people with a guide. They walk around.

The guide has now come this way in different languages. The guide explains what this means, when it was built, or who is... this is a tomb, or this king, or whoever lies there, and all kinds of interesting information.

And just occasionally when I walk into a place like that, an ancient cathedral, I kind of approach the little group and just listen in and stand at the side and just see what he's saying. It's sometimes quite interesting, but I never feel drawn to actually sticking around for very long, because I prefer to explore the place by myself without the interference of a voice explaining to me what things are. Now, it may well be that I may have read a guidebook beforehand, or I may not.

But in most cases, probably I have not looked at a guidebook beforehand. So I'm actually going into this, let's say it's a medieval cathedral. I'm walking into this medieval cathedral not knowing very much about it, except it was built a thousand years ago, whatever, and it took two or three hundred years to build.

But I prefer that experience of entering a space and not being burdened by information about it, rather than entering a space and immediately being bombarded with facts about it. There are two very different kinds of experiencing that place. One kind of experiencing that place is based on bits and pieces of information, on knowledge, on mental knowledge, on mind.

And this is why most people travel for that reason, because they want to learn new things. So as soon as they enter the cathedral, they say, OK, I'm going to join this guided tour. Or, these days, they have invented something to substitute the human guide.

You can rent a little device, recording with earphones, and you can choose your language, and you put it on your ears, and then you choose your language, and then it tells you where to go. Now turn right here, stop here, and then it starts explaining it. You look.

And you're continuously learning a lot. And then, OK, walk on now ten steps, and now look up to the left, and you will see more information, information coming in. Very interesting.

I'm learning so much about history. It's true, you are. You're learning a lot.

And so you walk around this cathedral with the voice in your head, teaching you about it. What's wrong with that? Nothing.

It's fine. Why don't I do that? Because there is another way of experiencing, of perceiving that place.

And that's not something that people even know about. Some people do it intuitively. And that way is going into that place, and not perceive whatever is around you through the veil of facts, information, knowledge, thoughts.

Ultimately, it all comes down to thoughts, one thought after another. There is another way of perceiving that place that is not based on mind activity. And I love that other way

more than the way of learning about.

There's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes I read a guidebook afterwards, after I've been to a place like that. I read, oh, that's what I saw, and have a little bit of information about it.

But at first, I love entering that place and perceiving, first of all, the totality of this, the vast, let's say it's a cathedral, it could be other places, but there's always, there's a spaciousness there, there's a vastness, there's a silence, interrupted, of course, sometimes by the voice of the guides here and there, and the clicking of cameras. But there is still a vastness, a silence, the whole place has a presence. There's an energy field there.

And the first thing that I love to take in is to enter and to take in the totality of that energy field that is this ancient cathedral, to sense it, to feel it directly. And it has its own presence, it's an energy field. I like to get in touch with this ancient energy field, ancient and new, because it's still alive.

And then look around at this architecture, and so on, and again, just see the shapes, the forms, the colors. So you see, be aware also of the space itself, because anybody who goes into a place like that and is struck by something, they go, wow. Even people who later seek out the guide, there may be a few seconds when they take in this and go, they sense something, a sacred presence, you could almost say, they sense it, they don't need to know anything about it.

In fact, you cannot sense the presence of that place if your mind is full of thoughts, full of knowledge. And if you enter a cathedral and you are, let's say, you are already very knowledgeable, you're a historian or whatever, and you know much, you would have to let go for a moment of all that you know if you truly wanted to experience that place. So I always a little bit feel sorry for most tourists, because they don't seem to be aware that there is another way of experiencing life, there is another way of perceiving, other than the mind, through the mind only.

There's nothing wrong with the mind, it has its place, and it's needed for quite a few things in your daily life. But for many other things, for realizing the depths of life and becoming a deep person, that's a strange expression that's sometimes used. You say this person has a depth, or we speak of a depth of perception.

What does that mean for a person? You would say there's a shallow person and there's a deep person. What does that mean?

I would say it means what we might call a shallow person, a person who is totally trapped only in the mind activity, the knowledge accumulated by the mind, and perceives everything through thoughts. In other words, you walk around your life like the

tourist who rents this little device and tells him comments about what they are perceiving continuously. That's fine, sometimes it may be necessary, but imagine going through life, not being able to get rid of that device.

You can't take it off anymore. It keeps commenting. So wherever you go in the street, it says, OK, look at that person there.

And the thing even tells you whether you like it or not. I like that, or I don't like that. I wish I had an answer on whatever.

And of course, this is how most people live, because they are so identified with the involuntary mind activity, the little voice in the head, they don't even know it. They think they are the voice. And to live through the voice then makes your life quite shallow, because whatever you experience lacks depth.

You experience it through a concept. Every thought is conceptual. So when, let's say, you are in the street, a man or woman comes towards you, and your mind immediately has to say something about whether you like or don't like or would like to do something with this person, whatever it may be, or have some kind of reference point or commenting on the way they look, weird or strange or nice, or I'd like to, whatever.

Is there another way of perceiving this human being? Yes. To perceive the human being in the same way.

If that's what I said about the cathedral, if that resonates with you, if you have had a glimpse of that experience or perhaps more than a glimpse, then you know the difference between stepping into a place and going, no comment. Well, perhaps the mind says, oh, this is so beautiful, and then there is stillness again. So there is a still space through which you perceive instead of concepts through which you perceive.

And suddenly there is a depth. Not only do you feel another dimension is suddenly present, not only outside of you, another dimension that the tourist, who is totally dependent on either the mechanical guide or the human guide, is not aware of that, that the tourist who only listens to the commentary misses the true aliveness, the sacredness, and the depth of that place. And so, also within, you are trapped in the head.

There is no depth then to you as a human being. There is something that responds to life, something deeper than the commentary in your head. And so many people these days are trapped then with this guide, the tourist guide they can't get rid of.

And it's called your mind. And so, not that the mind is not a useful tool, and even in the cathedral it sometimes adds a little bit to it if you know something about it. And I would say that's the second stage to come back just for a moment to this cathedral analogy.

One could almost say you come back to that. Of course, ideally, and I do that occasionally, but sometimes we don't have enough time when we travel. First, I love to experience the place without knowing anything, and truly experience it, the depth of it.

And then, perhaps, go back to the hotel room, and then look at a guidebook, and then learn a few facts about it. Could be quite helpful. And then go back the next day, look at it again, and then you have a balance between knowing things about it and still being able to experience it.

So, in other words, you have then some information in your head. Oh, this is, I read about that. It was built by such and such, then and then, whatever.

And then again, you have the spaciousness where you perceive. And then you look at something else, and you say, oh, this is the statue of the saint so-and-so, and some knowledge about it that you have had, might have overlooked, a little detail. You can actually see a tear coming out of his eye, or whatever.

Oh, yeah, there's a tear. He seems to be crying. Don't know why, but he seems to be.

And then again, you can take it in without the commentary. So that's a little, you can experiment with that. And so, I'm using that almost as just an analogy for the whole of your life.

Most people are stuck with the tourist guide in their head. It comments continuously of what's going on in your life, and evaluates and interprets and defines in words everything that you perceive. And so, in whatever way it is defined or interpreted depends on your particular conditioning, on the way you were brought up, what you were taught by the surrounding culture, and so on.

So the kind of tourist guide you have depends on your past. And so, it's really your past talking to you continuously, certain forms of conditioning from your culture, your education, your family background, what you have read. Your fears and ambitions are also expressed there as thought structures.

They become thoughts, what you would like, want, what you fear. What if that happens? Oh my God, this could go wrong.

What if... So it becomes very problematic because the voice doesn't stop talking. Except occasional moments when you suddenly feel a heightened sense of aliveness.

Perhaps you're out in nature and you're looking up at a tree or a forest or... And for a moment you say, wow. And then after a few seconds the mind says, that's beautiful.

But for about 10 seconds or 20 seconds the mind wasn't saying anything. And that's the reason that you can know that it's beautiful. Beautiful is not...

The mind is concepts. There's no beauty really in that. If something from within you responds to beauty in nature, for a moment there must have been a space where the tourist guide in the head stopped talking.

And in that space there is a deeper experiencing of whatever is there. There's a depth to your experience. What does that mean?

It means, yes, what you see is the same, but the state of consciousness through which you see it has deepened. A space has opened up inside you through which the perception happens. And that's the depth.

So you could say when you look at something and for a moment you are not interpreting what you see. There's just the seeing and you may be aware of the background to what you see which cannot be defined, but there's a stillness inside while you perceive. This is what I meant when I talked about entering a cathedral without the knowledge in your head.

So suddenly the mind has become still and the perception happens. So you have two dimensions. You have a stillness in the background and whatever is going on outside is there.

The stillness is the depth that changes your perceptions. Then you see that the tree also has a depth to it and an aliveness and a sacredness that you didn't know before when you were conceptualizing the tree and said, oh, that's such and such a tree and whatever knowledge you have, or this tree is in my grandmother's garden too, or this, I'd like to chop this tree up and use it as my Christmas tree, or I wonder how much it would be worth the timber if I cut it, how much the timber would be worth.

You're not really, the tree is a surface phenomenon when you're in that state of consciousness, a utilitarian surface phenomenon, you cannot sense the depth, the aliveness, the sacredness of the tree, and I'm only using tree as one of many possible examples. Life, really, the tree stands for life. It could be a human being.

You cannot sense the aliveness of that if you are totally trapped in conceptualization in your head. So, there needs to be a depth to you in order to recognize that there is also a depth in life. Otherwise, you walk around for the rest of your life skimming the surface of life.

Just every human being is a surface phenomenon because you just have judgments about them and it's just no depth. And then you can go into nature and even there you will not know that nature has a sacredness to it because you can't sense it because you haven't the space isn't there inside you to sense that when you go into a forest, an ancient forest that's been there for thousands of years and you cannot sense that that is a sacred space because otherwise you would go, wow. And then you would and if you

don't know it's sacred and our civilization doesn't know, it looks at the forest as a utilitarian thing.

How much would it be worth? So, the people who cut down the ancient forests, they don't know what they are doing because they cannot sense that there is more there than what appears to be there on the surface of things. But since they themselves are trapped in the surface of their own mind only, they have no idea what they are doing when they log an ancient forest.

To them it's just a utilitarian thing. You talk to them and say, what are you talking about? We are going to plant trees again.

Yeah, but it will take a thousand years to reach that sacredness. No idea what you say sacredness, what do you mean? It's a tree.

We are harvesting the trees. And so this is one example of what happens when you cannot get out of the conceptualizing mind. Life has no depth anymore.

And getting out of the conceptualizing mind is what I call spiritual awakening. So spiritual awakening has nothing to do with some kind of suddenly you have new spiritual thoughts in your head and you start talking about angels or even God. You suddenly start talking about God all the time and then people say, oh he has become spiritual.

No he hasn't, he has become religious. Religious without spiritual is an ideology. You could be a communist and then talk in those terms, whatever.

It's an ideology. Sometimes religious and spiritual can go together but in many cases religious only is just more thoughts in your head but different kinds of thoughts. Then God of course becomes my God and your God is not the right one.

And then you become my enemy and I will conceptualize you as the non-believer for example. And the non-believers are evil. Another concept.

And the non-believers must be killed because we know the truth and the truth is our God. Concepts, concepts in the mind. You can no longer sense and then when you do kill somebody, you're not killing a human being because you cannot sense that there is a being there, another human being, you are killing.

There's a mental concept there. You have conceptualized, you have deadened, just as you've deadened the forest to yourself, you've deadened the other human being and made him into, you put some label on. Non-believer.

American. And so it's not a human being, it's American. This is, and that's how it, this is how the madness grows.

So, and of course they don't know what's happened to them. They don't realize what's

happening. They are unconscious and not unconscious in the conventional sense of the word because unconscious in the conventional sense of the word means they're lying there.

No, not that unconscious. They seem to be very alert with their guns or whatever they're doing but they are unconscious because they are totally trapped in the conceptualizing mind. They no longer sense the aliveness of life.

They have deadened themselves. They don't know who they are beyond the conceptualizing mind where they're completely identified with their belief structures that gives them, the belief structures give them their identity, their sense of who they are. I am a, whatever label they have.

We are the we. We are the only true et cetera, et cetera. And then it's the others, it's the others, them.

They're not alive. They're just, they're concepts. So it's easy to, when you no longer sense what you're doing to kill another human becomes easy because you no longer know that the human, the depths of the human being has disappeared.

And that's perhaps why Jesus on the cross said they know not forgive them for they know not what they do. In other words, they are unconscious. They have not awakened.

And so we are coming here from the tourists going into a cathedral and we've arrived at terrorists. Just an extension of really what is considered a normal state of consciousness and what it does to you to be trapped in that your whole life is a dreadful fate and the reason why we on this planet have arrived at such a point of extreme crisis is that this state of consciousness that we have been trapped in for thousands of years has created and is creating increasing havoc and destruction. It destroys nature.

It destroys human beings destroying each other. What we do externally is always a reflection of the predominant collective state of consciousness. And if you read the 20th century history you see what human beings have done to each other.

The only conclusion you can reach is they are mad. It's quite mad. And 20th century is just the most extreme form of that madness where human beings kill each other by the millions.

Often they don't even know what for. In the end you don't even know anymore what the whole thing is for. The First World War what was that whole thing about?

And then the First World War led to the Second World War and so on and innumerable other wars. So we need the spiritual awakening then is for the planet or humanity to survive is an absolute necessity. So having realized then that what is needed is to awaken out of complete identification with the continuous stream of thinking in your

mind.

Okay, well how do we do that? Simple first step is to realize that there is a continuous stream of thoughts in your mind. This is the first step of awakening.

It's not saying I shouldn't be thinking. No, the first step is to realize that there is a voice that talks most of the time inside you. And perhaps that until now you had been so identified with the voice that was you.

You were talking to yourself. Sometimes people talk to themselves as I. Sometimes people talk to themselves as you.

You have a little voice that says you should have done that. Why didn't you do that? The voice is talking to some other voice and then perhaps there is an answer.

Well, I couldn't help it. Yeah, but you should have... So sometimes the voice splits itself into different voices.

Talking to each other becomes even more mad. And sometimes the voice also can have certain streams that one stream of the voice only comes up in certain circumstances. What some psychologists have discovered that this is the case.

Some psychologists call it sub-personalities. So in certain circumstances perhaps a whining little girl suddenly comes up. But you're 30 years old.

Why are you still... It's a sub-personality. And suddenly you have a whining voice in your head that complains about how unfair life is treating me.

It's a sub-personality talking. And then when that subsides something else happens and another voice suddenly comes in and becomes extremely aggressive. Another stream, another aspect of that has arisen.

Sometimes different voices take over but really it all belongs ultimately to the one thing, the one voice in your head. So the first step to awakening, the beginning of awakening is to realize there's a voice in my head. And it's especially useful to realize in the moment of it saying, for example, voices have all, most of the mind activities old thoughts, old patterns, repetitive thoughts.

For example, I had when I was younger I had a frequent thought that said whenever something that wasn't good happened to me or that my mind interpreted as not good, the voice in my head would say, you see bad things always happen to you. And then I was just waiting for the next bad thing to confirm that I was right. And it would never have to wait for very long and something else would go wrong in my life and I would say, you see it's happening again, always bad things to you, I don't know why it's always to you.

And then of course you experience the emotion that goes with that kind of thought. And I completely believed in that thought. I was so identified with that thought I didn't realize this is just a thought in my head, it's not the reality.

It's a conditioned way of interpreting the phenomenal world, the world just outside you. And so the liberation then comes with beginning to realize the voice is saying the same thing again and again and again and it's not me it's the voice. Who realizes that?

You. So there is a deeper dimension is suddenly there when you become aware that all the stuff that your mind is saying to you and to others is not ultimately who you are. But the awareness that at this moment your mind is reproducing the same old thoughts there you're beginning to touch the depths that is within yourself that we could call the awareness, the aware presence.

Because knowing that there is thought in my head is not a thought it's just a looking an internal aware why do bad things always happen to me? And then you look at the thought and you realize a thought. So you begin to, one could almost say you listen to your thoughts, you become aware of the kinds of thoughts you think.

And when this is for many people the first awakening. And what people realize when they first awaken, not everybody, because some people's thoughts are not too bad. They can live with it quite well.

So their thought activity is not predominantly negative. But many people actually find that when they become aware of their thoughts they realize how many thoughts are actually negative. The majority of people become aware that the larger part of your mind activity is negative thoughts.

There are far more negative thoughts than positive thoughts. Not in everybody. Some people have quite a few positive thoughts.

One could almost say it's easier for people who are trapped in a lot of negative thinking to step out of their thinking than people who have relatively nice thoughts. Their inner urge to awaken is not as strong. If you live in a self-made nightmare as I did the impulse to awaken is much stronger than you really...

I can't stand my mind anymore. I don't want to live with this mind anymore. Oh, that's good.

It doesn't mean you have to kill yourself. It just means you have to realize that your mind is not who you are. You are the awareness behind your mind.

You are the space. Because the awareness is space. It's not a thought.

It's consciousness. So there's a depth of consciousness to you of which the thought

activity is only like little ripples. You could say there's a vast ocean or lake very deep with lots of waves and ripples on the surface.

And the waves and ripples on the surface are the thoughts in your head. And so most people are trapped on that level. They don't realize that there is a depth underneath that that is vast.

And that if they ever wanted to become creative human beings or bring anything new into this world, it would have to come from the depth. It can't come from just the surface activity of your mind. It's repetitive continuously.

Same kind of thing. Nothing creative can ever happen on that level alone. One day I'm going to compose a great piece of music.

One day I'm going to write a great book. Well, not if you don't get out of that. Of course the mind is needed to write a book.

Yes. But you cannot have a deep or inspired thought if you don't make room, a moment for the depth inside you so that you touch something deeper. You need to become still for a moment when you sit in front of your computer or notepad and want to write something new and creative.

Bring something new into this world. Well, where does that come from? From the repetitive noise in your head?

No. It comes if for a moment the repetitive noise in your head subsides. That's the moment of stepping into the cathedral.

Ah. And then you wait. So there is a open yourself to the stillness inside.

It's there. You don't have to make yourself still. Underneath even in the most mad, the maddest person, underneath that there is the realm of stillness.

They just can't touch it. It's there. So it's very easy to actually embrace saying, OK, you don't need to think all the time.

You need to have spaces of no thought and it's not that difficult unless you're totally mad. But not that many people are totally mad. Most people are partially mad.

Ha, ha. And the madness comes up occasionally in a more acute form. It's there.

So can you walk into the cathedral and be there as an aware presence rather than a mind burdened with knowledge? Can you walk along the street and look at another human being without commenting? Just look.

And sense. When there's no commenting, you can sense there's an aliveness in the other

human being. There's an essence there that is even deeper than your mind and deeper than their mind.

And if you then communicate with that human being while you, for example, while you listen to them, can you be still inside while you listen? You might be talking about the weather. It doesn't matter.

But be still and just be there as the space for that human being as you are there as the space for the tree and realize what an incredible phenomenon this tree is. Beyond anything that you could know about it through the mind. What you know may be useful for certain things, but there's a depth to that thing that we call tree that you cannot capture through that, but you can sense something.

And the more you sense it outside, the deeper you go within. And there is an even greater depth in another human being. And the more you sense the depth of aliveness in another human being, the more you sense it in yourself.

It always goes together. So, relationships become problematic if both parties are totally trapped in their noise-making mind. Then very quickly, conflict arises in relationships.

And that's why relationships are full of conflict because people can't get out of that. They are trapped in here. So, every discussion, when they disagree, becomes conflict.

You have an opinion. This is how it is. I'm right.

You identify with your mental position. Your partner has a different mental position. No, you're not.

I'm right. You identify with your opinion. Identify means your sense of self is in the thought that you have in your mental position of this is how it is.

Today it's cold. Your partner says, no, it's not cold. It's just mild.

No, it's cold. I'm just giving an oversimplified example. Even that could lead to an argument because are you accusing me of being a liar?

[Speaker 5] (4:58:58 - 4:59:05)

laughter laughter It's all moving in concepts.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:09 - 4:59:11)

Well, you did lie last week.

[Speaker 5] (4:59:11 - 4:59:16)

laughter laughter I wasn't lying.

[Speaker 1] (4:59:16 - 6:00:28)

I was just... laughter And it goes on and on and on. laughter So you are...

And it's all happening. The entire relationship is mind. Mind against mind.

So you identify with mind and that becomes the ego. The me that needs to be right. Always.

If the ego is wrong, it's death. It thinks, I'm dead. I'll die.

Can't be wrong. I need to defend my position. Dreadful fate.

But it's normal. So, we are now slowly getting to what spiritual awakening is because we have looked at what spiritual sleep is. We've seen what it means to be asleep or unconscious.

Normal in other words. Normal existence. The entire world Not the entire world.

There's some awakening here and there. More and more people, in fact, are awakening. Going through the awakening process.

We now know what that is because it means you're no longer identified with the mind. Who are you if you're not your mind? You are the consciousness out of which every thought comes.

And then it pops back. It's like a wave or ripple. You are the consciousness that is far greater than any single thought or even greater than the totality of thought.

And that consciousness is experienced when you first touch it as inner stillness. Stillness doesn't mean you go to sleep. It means the mind is where the mind was before.

There's a space. And out of that space comes all creativity. Every great realization or insight that any human being has ever had.

The creative impulse comes out of the vast intelligence that is there. And then the mind, it flows into the mind and the mind becomes an instrument for that. And that's how the mind can be a beautiful thing.

When it's not just self-serving but it is serving something greater than itself. The mind as a master is mad. The mind as a servant is a great thing.

So that's the shift in consciousness that is happening and needs to happen on this planet. The mind finds its place as the servant of consciousness or awareness. So it's up to you then to invite the consciousness that you are beyond the mind into your daily life.

And how do you do that? You do that by inviting space, inner space or inner stillness into

your life. For example, while you make a cup of tea or coffee, why not try to practice being still with every movement.

Just be aware, bring awareness into that every movement. Pour the water, no commentary. Look at a flower, look at a tree, look at the sky and for just a few seconds just look.

Listen to the wind, listen to the rain, listen to whatever sound you can hear and just listen. Bring the attention to sense perceptions. Attention to sense perceptions.

That means the mind is quiet while you listen. The mind is quiet while you look. And that's a little practice that you can do many times during the day and it will deepen your life.

It will bring spaces into otherwise an existence that goes from one thing that you have to do to another thing you have to do and another thing you have to think about now. Then there's no gaps. So the gaps are vital in daily life.

Inviting gaps into your daily existence. Looking for the gaps in daily existence. In everyday situations.

A helpful thing, as many of you already know, is to feel that your body is actually alive inside. Normally people are not aware of that because their whole attention is on thought activity. But if you can feel that your body is alive, so the attention is, some attention can be in the energy field of your hands, you feel, yes, you feel alive.

There is an aliveness that pervades the entire body. Your body is full of life. But most people can't feel that.

So if you can feel the inner body, that you are alive inside, the entire body at this very moment is a vibrating alive energy field. And it actually feels good to have some of your attention there, even while you are looking around the room. You can just, for people who are new to this, can just start by doing it with their hands.

Feel the aliveness that's in your hands. You can feel it perhaps even more with your eyes closed. And then you can still feel it even when your eyes are open.

Simultaneous thing, you are present inside your body and you are present outside in your sense perceptions. What does that do? It means your mind becomes quite still, because you can't be thinking also at the same time, because you're already present in the body and you are present outside.

You become awake, really awake to this moment then. And your mind, there's not enough attention left then for thinking. Part of your attention is in the inner body and part of your attention is on your perceptions.

And what you perceive then is more alive than it was before. It's more surprising. It's more, it has more depth to it.

Every human being is more interesting then. More really there. New.

Things are, you no longer feel that you're experiencing the same old thing again and again. Life then is always new. Every day is a new day.

It's not a repetition. As people grow older, they reach 30 years, 40 years, 50 years and for many people, life becomes more and more boring. Because it's so repetitive.

And they no longer look anywhere. They go every day, they go to work in the same place. They don't look at anything anymore.

There's nothing to look at. I looked at it yesterday and last year and five years ago. What's there to look at?

And even people they live with for a few years, after a few years you don't look at your wife or husband anymore. They're part of the furniture. And you don't look at your paintings anymore on the wall because they've been there for too long.

You can't look. It's there old. And really nothing new.

And then you become that kind of person who said, I've seen it all. Don't tell me about it. I know it all.

I've had yeah, I know that kind of person. I know that kind of thing. I've been there, done it.

Been there, done it. Life becomes more and more dull. Been there, done it.

You're not there and you're not... And so that's the that's the fate of many people as they grow old in our civilization. And only a few, perhaps an increasing number now because more and more people are awakening spiritually, they remain alive, perhaps even become more alive as they grow older.

And then you have a truly and then the person doesn't actually, you don't get, even if they're 70, 80 years old, you don't get the impression that they're old people because there is a light shining through their eyes, there is an aliveness to them. And occasionally you meet people like that. They may be old in terms of calendar years, but they're not old inside because they are not they are not burdened by their mind anymore.

Their mind can be used, but they are no longer being used by their mind which says, I already know all this. And so every day is new and fresh and every moment is still alive because you're not putting your past you're not obscuring it with past, the accumulated

past in your head putting it onto the aliveness of the present moment, stifling the aliveness of the present moment. And so then spiritual awakening is then essentially intrinsically connected with the aliveness of the present moment, the only place where life is.

And so you are more and more open to the now rather than live continuously in past and future, which is normal. For most people it's future until they reach a certain age where there's not much future left and then they live mostly in the past. That's why old people, many old people, continuously talk about the past.

And the younger people continuously think about their future where they're going to finally make it someday and find fulfillment in some future when they have done or achieved this, whatever it may be. It could be a big house or recognition or for spiritually inclined people it could be enlightenment. But it's put into the future as I'm going to reach that place and then I'll be finally fully myself, fulfilled, happy, alive.

I will become alive one day, fully alive. But without ten million dollars in the bank, I don't think I can feel alive. Because I really need to have that sense of security, you know.

I need the sense of security without which I'll just be in fear the way I've always been. And you'll be surprised if the ten million dollars happen to come to you for a few weeks you will feel alive and one night you'll wake up and you'll be in the same fear as before. Because the stock market is about to collapse.

So spiritual awakening is becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment. And becoming awake to the aliveness of this moment, the all there ever is, nothing else is ever going to come. You can wait for millions of years if you lived that long.

Nothing is ever going to come that's not this moment. Your life will always be this moment. It sounds, well, we know that.

No, you don't. If you don't live it, you don't know it. Life is always this moment.

You don't know this if you don't live it. It's only through living it that you know it. Otherwise it's just a concept in your head.

Yeah, of course life is always this moment. And then what's next? Where's the next moment?

So you might as well then become friendly with this moment. If there's nothing else, be open to that. Don't stifle it with an excessive amount of judgments and interpretations and definitions.

But be open to the aliveness of this moment. Open means there's spaciousness here. So the shift is from a thought-based entity, which is the normal old way for humans, been

for thousands of years, to a deeper entity that is based in awareness of presence, consciousness.

So when you're not commenting on things compulsively, who are you? When you're not continuously thinking about me and my problems, at this very moment, let's say, pretend that you don't remember your past at this moment. In fact, you don't, because at this moment, unless you start a thought process, at this moment, your past is not here.

You're just sitting here now. But pretend for a moment actually there's no past and there's no future. What's left of you?

If I removed your past and your future from you now, what's left? I remember nothing. What's left?

I don't remember my name. Who are you? I don't know.

But there must be something there. Yes, there is something there, but I can't say what it is. That's who you are.

Consciousness itself. When you remove the content from consciousness for a while, then you realize that you are consciousness. When the content, content is thoughts and emotions and thoughts and thoughts.

When the content comes back, it obscures the reality that you are consciousness and you identify with content. And that's why some people have been able to awaken spiritually because life took away their content. They lost everything suddenly.

They lost their reputation, in other words their name. It happens sometimes that life does these things to people. They lost their money, their possessions.

They lost even their family. They suddenly were killed in an accident. A big earthquake came.

Everything lost. And they sit there. Their house is in ruins.

Everything gone. And suddenly some of these people suddenly had a deep spiritual awakening. Why?

Because life took away all the things that they had identified with as themselves, as the me. And what was left was what we just did now here when I asked you to pretend that there is no past and future. We took away for a moment content from your life.

And what is when you remove content? Because content is going to disappear anyway. It's not permanent.

Whatever content you have is impermanent in your life. Things come and go. Or as the Buddha says, it's impermanence is the word.

Transient. Everything is transient. And that refers to content.

So as long as you are identified with all the content in your life, that can go very quickly. Even your body can go very quickly. But if you just beyond content is consciousness itself.

Rather than what consciousness has identified with. And you are that. I am that.

You and I on that level are the same. We are in essence the essence of who you are is consciousness. Everything else is added temporarily.

It's a disguise. Consciousness disguising itself as this and that and that person. Appearing in this particular form.

That's the play. Lila, the divine play of life. As it's called in India.

And that's fine. The play is not to be rejected. But you can only enjoy the play of the phenomenal existence if you know what is beyond phenomenal existence.

So it's only if you know who you are beyond all the things in your life, you can actually truly enjoy the things in your life. While they last. And you don't need to cling because you know nothing is going to last.

Relationships. Whatever. It's only very young people who think there are lasting things.

Then you reach a certain age and you realize oh it's so many things have evaporated that I thought were permanent. And more things are going to evaporate. And a few more things are going to come.

And then evaporate. So not to live and your life is no longer content based but essence based. I'm giving you here in one little talk the entire essence of what spirituality really is all about.

And that's that really that's what it is. There's not much else that you need to know beyond that in the sense of knowledge, accumulated knowledge. It is now a question of living that.

And if you don't want to live it, that's fine. It means you have to suffer a bit more until you're ready to make this shift until the shift begins to happen. A human being needs to reach the point of readiness where they say okay I've done enough madness.

I've suffered enough. I'm ready for the shift. I'm ready to say okay this moment is all there ever is.

I might as well become friendly with it. Acknowledge it. Give it attention.

In whatever form it comes. Because the form is not the moment. It's the form that this moment takes.

The now. It's not what happens. The now is not what happens.

It's the space in which it happens. And essentially that space is consciousness. Everything happens in the light of consciousness.

You can say as some philosophers have done they question everything. Some philosophers have said is there anything I can be absolutely sure of? Because everything can be doubted.

I can doubt that you exist. You can doubt that I exist. It could be a dream.

Who says we are not dreaming right now? Who says that us sitting here is not a dream? You cannot know for sure.

But even if it is a dream there must be something real there because the dream must appear to something or someone. There must be a light in which the dream appears. A space in which the dream happens.

So even if it is a dream, the one thing you cannot question is the fact of being itself. Being is. The being may be a dream or it may not be a dream.

But one thing you can be certain is that you are. I am is something that cannot be doubted. If I'm dreaming that I am it's still, the essence of I am is still there in the dream then.

And that's an amazing thing. That's to realize there's one thing that is beyond doubt and that's I am. It's not as the philosopher Descartes said, I think therefore I am.

He confused consciousness with thinking. Perhaps because he was always thinking. So he couldn't stop thinking and then he said, okay, then if I can't stop thinking then the essence of who I am must be thinking.

I think therefore I know that I am. Well, he stopped too soon. He should have taken one more step and realized that beyond thinking there's consciousness.

And then realized because I am conscious I am. Because there is consciousness I am. I am that consciousness.

And that consciousness that people believe in our civilization, that the consciousness is a byproduct of chemical reactions in the brain. And many psychologists or scientists actually doubt that there is such a thing as consciousness. They say, no, there is no

consciousness.

It's just a chemical soup. But they do recognize that the brain is the most complex thing on the planet. And they'd understand a tiny fraction of it only.

So who built that incredibly complex thing through which consciousness comes if not consciousness? So consciousness is prior to whatever appears here. And what is the relationship between the brain and consciousness?

Even some scientists are beginning to say they recognize the possibility that consciousness may be all-pervasive throughout the universe and the brain is like a lens through which consciousness enters this dimension. So it's like a receiver. It reduces and receives consciousness.

So when you eliminate the brain, it does not mean you eliminate consciousness. You eliminate the receiver like a TV. You can smash the TV and suddenly the image disappears.

But the TV didn't produce the image. So that is our meditation. I am consciousness.

Not something to believe in. But we're using those words only as a pointer to the essence of who you are. Thank you.

This telling yourself of stories and then believing in them is just an amazing habit, deep-seated habit. The story of me, I call it sometimes, to strengthen your sense of identity. The end of stories is a wonderful beginning of wonderful simplicity in your life.

You don't need to impose stories on reality. You need to include people, people that you know, your parents. You don't need to tell and retell yourself the stories of what your parents did or didn't do or failed to do.

Or about yourself, what you did or failed to do. And continuously deriving your identity from the movement of thinking. The past.

Becoming free of the past and becoming free of identifying with thinking, the same thing. Again, presence, presence, presence is the way out. Presence.

The moment of stillness before we start. Not waiting for anything to happen, but just being in the moment now. Make sure you're comfortable in your own skin as you sit there.

If you're not comfortable then just notice that you're not comfortable and allow yourself to not be comfortable and then you become comfortable. I have a little treat in store. We will talk about, not only talk about, but go into the essence of the book that has been with me, accompanied me for the past 30 years.

A book that I've gone to, back to, periodically, I still go back to periodically, pick it up, read a page or two or three and meditate on it. It's one of the great treasures of spiritual literature and it is a book that was written in China 2,500 years ago. The Tao Te Ching.

Now that's a huge, seemingly a huge gulf that separates us from that time period and yet the book is still vitally alive and if a book that was written so long ago is still vitally alive it means it must have been written from a very deep place and point to something that is timeless. If it were not written from a deep, timeless place within the author and did not point to something that is beyond time, a book written 2,500 years ago would be irrelevant, meaningless, incomprehensible. Many books that were written 20 years ago are out of date or if you read yesterday's newspaper it's out of date.

So for something to still be alive now and to be deeply meaningful to many people there must be something there that is timeless and that is the essence of the book and that's what I would like to go into with you. So we are not going into a book, we are not going just going to study a book, we are just using the text to go deeply within, to discover something within ourselves. So all that the book is, is a device that helps us discover ourselves and our connection with the greater whole, the universe, whatever you want to call it.

So just very briefly, the historical context, it might be helpful to know just a little bit about that. This book was written about 2500-2600 years ago in China. In other words, 500-600 BC.

Now that was a very exciting and meaningful time period, something incredible was happening during those, let's say, one and a half to two centuries. For the first time in the history of humanity, as far as we can see, there was a universal wave of spiritual awakening coming over the planet at that time. So the author of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse, is a contemporary, more or less, of the Buddha in India.

So the Buddha and his teaching arose at the same time, approximately, as the teaching of Lao Tse, the author of the Tao Te Ching. So there was the Buddha arising in India, beginning to teach, and another significant teacher in India whose teaching did not go very much beyond India even to this day, but has remained very meaningful and profound in India, Mahavira, taught at approximately the same time as the Buddha, and it developed into Jainism, a religion, a very beautiful religion, still practiced widely in India, based on Ahimsa, non-violence and respect for all living beings.

All those things were revelations when they first came into being at the time, the teachings. So we have the Buddha in India, we have Mahavira in India, all arising at the same time. In Persia, we have Zoroaster, sometimes called Zarathustra, not to be confused with Nietzsche's Zarathustra, which is a completely different character.

Zarathustra, the prophet in Persia. We have at the same time in ancient Greece, and that

was a time before the famous Greek philosophers started to teach, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates. It was earlier than that.

Those were philosophers that arose for the first time there. They are called pre-Socratic philosophers because they predate Socrates. We only have fragments of their philosophy, but those fragments are enough to show us that their teachings were in some ways, this is how I feel, more profound than the later, more differentiated teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

My favorite pre-Socratic philosophers are Heraclitus and Parmenides, and we only have small fragments, but the fragments show us that those teachings were still in touch with the source of being, the source of life, the oneness that underlies all phenomena. And later, as the philosophy became more differentiated, that was becoming lost. The philosophies became very interesting and much more differentiated, but the connection with the root of all life, the unmanifested oneness, the transcendental dimension, gradually became lost.

So those philosophers, 500 and 600 BC, still had that connection. And they showed people, they also realized that humanity had lost it. So it was part of the wave of awakening that was coming over the planet, the teaching of those philosophers.

This is not philosophy as we understand it these days, it's about inner transformation, not speculation. Those were not speculative philosophers, in the same way that Buddha wasn't speculative, Mahavira wasn't speculative. So it is a transformational teaching.

It's about inner transformation, not about figuring something out with your mind. So we have that arising, the awakening arising in Persia, the awakening arising in India, the awakening arising in ancient Greece, and now we come to China, we have Lao Tse, his teaching at the same time was arising in China. All part of this wave of awakening that we are now experiencing again, even on a much larger scale now.

So we are at a similar time period, except that the wave of awakening that is coming into this world, of spiritual awakening, is on a much larger and more powerful and all pervasive scale. So we are in the middle of that. A hundred, two hundred years ago nobody in the West was discussing the Tao Te Ching, and this is why we can go back to it and understand it, because we are awakening.

Lao Tse was, we know very little about his life, he was, they say, in charge of the archives of a kingdom called Shu, and reached, I don't know how old he was when he was becoming bored with the life of the court and the intrigues and the conflicts around him, and so he decided to leave his job and to leave his homeland and just go out into solitude. And the story goes, nobody knows whether it is true, that he left and he got to the border of the kingdom, there was a front, a little border crossing and a gate, and the gatekeeper said, I'm not going to let you pass unless you write down your wisdom. So he

must already have had a certain reputation as a wise man, but he had never written anything.

And so, all he could do, he said, okay then, I'll write it down, we don't know how long it took, he wrote it down, and the gatekeeper let him go, and that is the Tao teaching. That is the teaching, and that is the book. And then, according to one story, the last we ever know of him, he was sitting on a water buffalo, riding off into nowhere, and that's the last that anybody ever heard of him, nobody ever saw him again.

That's one version of the story. Another version of the story is that he continued to teach and reached the age of 160 years. The Tao Te Ching is the title of the book, which is not usually translated.

People have tried to translate it, but unsuccessfully. Usually, they give you subtitles. So it says, Tao Te Ching, one of the traditional subtitles is The Way and Its Virtue.

And that's already somewhat of a mistranslation. Although Tao can be translated as The Way, you just can't translate Tao. Even if you translate it as Way, it's pretty meaningless.

And if you're a Chinese person, you're not at a great advantage. You still won't know what Tao is. So you're not at a great advantage.

The Tao is something that cannot be named. We'll come to that in a minute. So the subtitle, The Way and Its Virtue, Virtue is a mistranslation of the Te in the Tao Te Ching.

Virtue has become a dead word in our language. When did you last say Virtue? When did you last use that word?

Probably many years ago, if ever. So the word Virtue is not alive. What it really refers to is the power.

So to translate, it's the power of the, of spirit, of the transcendental dimension. The Way and Its Power is a better subtitle for the Tao Te Ching. The Way, how to live.

The Way, to living in alignment with the one power that underlies the universe. The one thing that you cannot name, that is not a thing. Living in alignment with the ultimate, which sometimes is called God, but the moment you call it God, it's not it.

You've made it into something. It is not something. It is something that flows through the entire universe, animates the entire universe, and at the same time is beyond it.

That is the Tao. And that is something that you can discover within yourself. You can live in a way that connects you with the inner source of all life, of all being.

So the Way and Its Power, He is teaching us how to live so that we are in alignment with the power that underlies all life. Which, as Lao Tzu says, for lack of a better word, I'll call

it the Tao. And the Tao, that's a good thing, because you can't do much with a word that you cannot exactly see what it means.

The same way that Buddha used the word emptiness. You cannot worship emptiness. It's almost, it's a negative term.

It negates form. So it's always been the tendency for humans to worship concepts. The concept of God arises in your mind, and then you start talking about God.

The concept of God becomes an idol, because it's no more than a thought. So that you can't do that with the Tao, because you can't picture it. You can't form an image of it.

In the same way that you can't form a picture, an image of emptiness. So that is the transcendental reality that the book points to, and it shows us the way to it. So there's great power there.

And the book came to me for the first time in my twenties, maybe mid-twenties. Somebody said, have a look at this. This is interesting.

And I looked at it, and something drew me into it, but then I couldn't quite...it was so obscure that I couldn't... I knew there was something hiding there in the book. There was some truth hiding, but I couldn't get it.

It was there, and then I put it aside and, OK, I have other things to do now. And then years passed, and then in my early thirties, I rediscovered the book in a different translation. There are many translations available.

And not only was the translation better, something had, by then, taken place within me, an awakening, a shift in consciousness. And through that new consciousness, I looked at the book, and I said, Wow! That's...he's talking...

I know what he's talking about. I realized the depth and the profundity of what those words were saying. And since then, I've been reading the book in different versions.

Not the actual physical book, but the Tao Te Ching has never left me. It's always been with me in one form or another. So that's the story behind the Tao Te Ching.

And now, let's see if we can go a little deeper into it. We are going to use... There are two translations that, at the moment, are my favorites.

We will use Stephen Mitchell's translation, fairly recent, Tao Te Ching. Another translation that I've had for a number of years, that I'm very fond of, is by Jia Fu Feng and Jane English. They, together, translated the Tao Te Ching.

And that's another beautiful translation. I will be using, mainly for today, Stephen Mitchell's translation or version of it. And the first two lines of the Tao Te Ching are very

famous.

I've quoted it quite a few times. But even there, sometimes translations differ. However, the first two lines are the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

What he's saying is you cannot really speak about the ultimate reality. Whatever you say about it is not it. However, he then continues to talk about it.

So, how is that? Well, he's telling you not to attach yourself to the words. Not to begin to believe in the words or in concepts.

Not to make it into some new belief. The truth is not in the words. That's what he's saying.

The truth, the words only point to the truth. And the truth is only to be found within you, beyond the realm of mind or of thinking or of concepts. So that's just a little very important, those first two lines.

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. And now let me tell you about it. Because the Tao is in you and the only place where you can discover it is in you.

And so, the book shows the way to discover who you are beyond who you thought you are. Beyond whatever your mind is telling you who you are. And now, the closest he comes to defining the Tao, which cannot be defined.

I'm just saying the closest he comes to defining it is in these little lines, which I will read to you now. And again, you need to listen to that not just with your head, but you need to listen to that with your belly or your entire being, those words, because you cannot understand them just through the mind. If they are meaningful, or if you can sense the power that is in the words, then you are sensing your own power beyond thought activity.

There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born. It is serene, empty, solitary, unchanging, infinite, eternally present. It is the mother of the universe.

For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao. Note that he begins by saying there was something formless and perfect before the universe was born, before the arising of form, before the Big Bang, you could say. He uses the past tense.

In the next line, he says, it is serene, empty, solitary. It is not only that which was there before the world came into being, it is that which continues to be there timelessly at the core of your being. That which was there before the Big Bang is still present in you, the unmanifested one life, one consciousness without which you are nothing.

It is the essence of who you are. And of course, if you say that to a normal materialist scientist, whatever, I'm saying a normal scientist, not a great scientist, then he'll say,

what is this nonsense? Or if you tell it to somebody who is totally close to you, they'll say, this is mumbo-jumbo.

There was something before the universe was born, and there's something. What are you talking about? And now listen, he very wisely, Stephen Mitchell, put in a little quote by one of the great scientists, Albert Einstein, what he had to say about it.

Somebody who did a lot of thinking, but whose thinking was rooted in the stillness, which, as we shall see, is an essential part of the teaching of the Tao. His thinking was rooted in the Tao, in the stillness beyond the noisy mind. That's where Einstein's realizations came from.

And so, he was not just trapped in his noisy mind, like most scientists, and then deny the reality of the transcendental, but he was connected with it. And he said, I'm not used to quoting from books in talks. Here's Einstein talking.

The scientist's religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, in comparison with it, all systematic thinking of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling is the guiding principle of my life and work, the recognition of a vast intelligence that underlies all of creation. Instead of saying, what, something more intelligent than me?

That can't be. That's mumbo-jumbo. But something that I can't understand, I can't categorize, what mumbo-jumbo is that?

This is what the dowdy jingle standing on tiptoe and you're not stable. It's in the flower. It creates that.

It's in you. It pervades the very space around us. It comes through the human brain, becomes, the brain is like a, gives it some form.

And when the brain goes, it no longer goes through that form. It's the very consciousness that you are. So this shows that Einstein was in touch with that dimension.

That's why his thinking was inspired. That's why he had sudden revelations. Now, now we come to the first, slightly longer, just a few lines, never more than a few lines at a time.

How to live to be in touch with that? Can, I'll read the whole, this little section first and then we'll look at the lines and go into it. Not just, not with the intellectual mind, but sensing our way into it.

Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? Can you

let your body become supple as a newborn child's? Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course? Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing. Having without possessing. Acting with no expectation.

Leading and not trying to control. This is the supreme virtue. For virtue substitute power.

The power moves through you if you live in that way. You become it. You realize your oneness with it.

Back to the beginning. Can you coax your mind from its wandering? It wanders about.

If you look at your own mind, that's what it does. It goes. One thought leads to another thought and goes on and on.

Sometimes I call it the voice in the head. Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness? In other words, is it possible for you to sit still for a moment and don't give attention to every thought that says, follow me.

I'll show you the way. That's what every thought says. I'm important.

Think about this. Think about this. Okay, and once you follow up one thought, then it becomes another one and another.

Stream. Then you get, that's how most people live. Continuously immersed in just chatter, mental chatter.

Streams of thinking. It's even become literature in the 20th century. It's called the stream of consciousness.

James Joyce. You get 30 pages without any punctuation marks. He wrote down how he observed his own mind and he wrote down how it works.

It goes on and on. No period, no comma, nothing. Normal.

So once you know that and most people don't even know that. They are so identified with it. That's who I am.

I think. It's not even that they say, I think, because they are the thoughts. And they miss the vast dimension underneath thoughts.

That's why I say, okay, just don't give all that importance to your thoughts. Just come to a point of rest. This is where the present moment becomes so important because it's the

present moment that can take you out of the stream of thinking.

Just becoming alert to this moment. There's nothing much to think about as you sit here. What can you add to this moment that's better than what's already here?

Or when you look at a flower, why add thought to it? Or when you look at another human being, why add thought to the beautiful perception of that? And you keep to the original oneness.

The moment you're no longer dominated by thinking and you realize there's a realm beyond thinking inside me, you're connected to the oneness because it's only through thinking that the illusion of separation arises when you start calling things this and that and judging and naming. Doesn't mean you can't do it anymore, but you're not trapped in it anymore.

[Speaker 5] (6:00:29 - 6:00:30)

Ah! Ah!

[Speaker 1] (6:00:33 - 7:13:22)

Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's? When you are immersed in thinking, your body becomes rigid because it reflects what's going on in here, a lot of which is problematic. I need to think about this.

And the more problematic your thinking is and all thinking is problematic, the more lifeless your body becomes and the flow of energy through the body diminishes. You get rigid, you get tense, you're holding in. Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child?

This is a free translation. If you go back to the more literal translation, he's actually saying can you concentrate your chi or your vital energy until your body becomes supple as a little child's? This is really, he's teaching body awareness.

Can you go within, take attention into the body and to feel that you're alive inside? Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Can you feel the aliveness in your feet?

Can you feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body? Takes you out of your mind. Even as you sit here, can you feel that?

There's a very ancient Taoist practice thousands of years old, almost as old as the Tao Te Ching which tells you you should breathe with your heels from your heels upward. It says can you breathe from your heels upward? Of course you can't because you can't suck in air with your feet.

But it's just what it's saying is it is directing attention to your feet and you imagine that

you're breathing from down there. You're breathing through your heels. What that does is you suddenly become aware it starts from the bottom of your entire energy field.

I'm breathing in, just simply imagine are you breathing in from your feet. Energy starts to move in from down there. Imagine that you're actually breathing in from your feet and then the energy of the breath flows into the body.

Very ancient practice. That particular one I only discovered two days ago that somebody that thousands of years ago they recommended that already. And I said, oh that's the inner body.

That's what I was talking about. I always talk about. Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

That is perhaps a somewhat obscure, although there's light in it, but to the mind it's a little obscure. What do you mean cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light? The light is the light of consciousness.

Cleansing your inner vision as to still the mind until you become aware of awareness. Until you become aware that you are conscious. And then that remains always there.

This entire little chapter is really how to be in the world, but at the same time connected with the source. At this moment it might be easier if you forget. Don't think of yourself as somebody having a past.

Don't think of yourself as somebody having a future. What's left of you right now without that? Consciousness.

Just a presence. Not an opinion or memory. That's the light of consciousness and that's the Tao really.

You cannot grasp it. You cannot make it your object of knowledge and say, oh, there it is. There's the light of I can see the light of consciousness.

No. You are the light of consciousness through which everything is seen. You can't see it.

You can't grasp it. It underlies everything. It's so there.

It's who you are. It's your presence. Vanessa, your presence is not quite right because it's not yours.

It's you. It's oneness. If I say your presence then there's you and presence.

But language works in that way. It creates duality. And that's what the Tao Te Ching is about.

It's realizing that that's an illusion. Can you love people and lead them without imposing

your will? Imposing your will in another translation it's always helpful to look at different translations it says can you be without cleverness in this world?

I talk about cleverness in one of the books that the ego is clever because it tries to work out some advantage for myself or for us. It has its little schemes. It tries to use people.

That's cleverness. Politicians are clever most of them. Very few are intelligent.

PhD doesn't mean you're intelligent. Well, whether they have PhDs or not it has nothing to do with that. Intelligence is to see the larger whole of all and then not just act to enhance one little fragment and then be in opposition to the rest of the world of life.

But see the totality. Can you be without cleverness? Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

That's a very fundamental teaching of the Tao is not to interfere in the way things are moving. And even if so you don't, there's no violence whatsoever and that's of course beautifully practiced in all martial arts. In martial arts the opposing energy that is coming towards you is not resisted.

This is deeply influenced by the Tao Te Ching. Non-resistance going with the movement of life. The western approach is somebody comes towards you and you hit back.

It comes towards you and you go Oh! And the eastern is it comes, the force is coming towards you and you go with it and then suddenly your opponent falls. The very energy of that attack movement is used to defeat the opponent.

You have not opposed it. You go with it. There's almost we can say no violence in it and yet extremely powerful.

And that can be applied in many things. It can be applied in daily life in not getting involved in useless discussions, not identifying with mental positions of rightness. I'm right and you are wrong and then you start this energy totally takes you out of yourself.

Not engaging in useless discussions. Being able to listen in a state of openness to another. Not identifying with your opinions and then opposing somebody else's opinion.

Can you step back? Oh! Before that, can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

Now I looked at another translation that's a little closer to the original which says instead of by letting events take your course, it says by becoming the female. Can you deal with the most vital matters by becoming the female? The female principle.

Female is often used as synonymous with the Tao. So one could almost say that the feminine principle is the principle of allowing, which is like this. Whereas the male

principle is this.

If you want to see it and express this is the male goes like that. The female goes like that. And according to this teaching, the female is one could almost say expresses the Tao more clearly than the male.

It's somewhat easier to express the Tao through the female form than the male form. If you're male then you have to discover the female in yourself to be one with the Tao. Also you have to discover that the allowing, for example, when I say allow this moment to be as it is.

That's a female. You're not fighting what is. You're allowing what is.

There's an embracing. You see it when sometimes with Guan Yin statues the holding hands like that or Virgin Mary statues which are all expressions of the female. All embracing.

All embracing. Can you be the female in any situation? So in a discussion some women would say, I don't like this idea.

I want to be powerful. They don't realize that the power of the female is enormous. The power of allowing is far greater than the power of interfering.

Can you be the female? Let's see what else we have. Before we go to another longer one.

How you receive this depends on your degree of openness to this message. So this sounds very familiar to me. That's why I'm just reading it to you.

Just a few lines. Some say that my teaching is nonsense. Others call it lofty but impractical.

But to those who have looked inside themselves this nonsense makes perfect sense. And to those who put it into practice this loftiness has roots that go deep. So there are some people in whom the openness is not there and then whatever we are talking about here is totally nonsensical.

So there needs to be something in you that recognizes the truth of this beyond words and concepts. Empty your mind of all thoughts. Let your heart be at peace.

I'm going to read the same again in a different translation. Just gives you a slightly different sense, different feel. Empty yourself of everything.

Let the mind become still. Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind become still.

Watch the turmoil of beings but contemplate their return. Watch the turmoil of this

world, of all the activity of this world, of all beings involved in running around. Watch it, which means be the awareness and contemplate their return.

They all return to the formless sooner or later. All the forms. Imagine you're seeing a movie.

I always, I love to see old movies, like movies made in the 30s or so, or 40s. And I love seeing, for example, you see street scenes, actual street scenes, big city, London, New York, whatever, people, hundreds of people running around to go about their business. But this is what the turmoil of beings, as it's called here, you have to see it and I see that in amazement I watch that.

This refers to watch but contemplate their return and when I watch that I realize all these people, the actual street scenes, all these people are no longer there. They're all dead now. It was so important what they were doing.

It looked so important. Running around, cars going and if you had seen a speeded up version of the movie, if you see a speeded up version of anything, if you saw a speeded up version of this room, like you sometimes see how a flower is a wonderful image, if you see, like do it on film, how a plant comes suddenly out of the soil over a period of a few hours or a few days it's filmed. So you see that period within a few seconds contracted.

So you see actually how the plant comes out of the soil, then leaves come out of the plant and the flower comes out and suddenly you see the flower is wilting, the leaves are wilting and falling off and then the entire plant goes gone. This is what it's talking about. You have to actually see.

It's an amazing thing when the touch, to see that when you truly watch that, something inside you goes, you can't put it into words, it goes, wow. Because you realize that applies to everything in this world is that way. It comes into being every body.

I'm really, I'm looking at my own body when I see it. It's just a slightly different version of that. It lasts a few years longer than the plant.

But if you saw even the baby growing into an adult, maturity, vitally alive, physically active and then gradually winding down and then beginning to look like a wrinkled apple or a pear and then suddenly the life force leaves and then sooner or later all the molecules and atoms say goodbye, we're going our own way now, and there's nothing left. Just an emptiness. If you saw this room and the people in this room, and let's see if we didn't move from this room and we had a camera here, you would see gradually the bodies dissolving or evaporating whatever, it would go very quickly.

I sometimes compare them to soap bubbles popping. So if you saw this, if we had this camera here over a period of, let's see, how long do you want to live? Another 50 years?

Then the soap bubbles would pop one after another. Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. Nothing left.

And then for a little while longer the physical forms would stay and then you would see gradually even the physical forms crumbling. They could take 2,000 years or whatever depending on atmospheric conditions. And even then the chairs could become dust.

So everything is dissolving. Birth, birth, dissolution. Everything, every form.

It's impermanent. And to watch, it's extremely powerful to watch that. This is why he's telling you, watch the turmoil of beings but contemplate their return.

Be aware of the impermanence of all forms. Not as a negative thing but simply as you see it for what it is. And if you are aware of the impermanence of all forms that all forms are short-lived, how can you be aware of it?

There must be something in you that is beyond that. It's only from as I sometimes say if the entire universe were blue, the color blue would not exist for you because there would be nothing to differentiate it from. If we said everything is blue, you say, what are you talking about?

There's blue. What's blue? If there's no other color.

If everything were impermanent, you wouldn't even know it. But there is something in you that is beyond that. It's only from there.

And that is why the contemplation of impermanence can put you in touch with that because that in you, which is the consciousness, the timeless presence, the light of consciousness, is not touched by that. And then the question the mind asks is, well, what about when I die? I lose consciousness.

Or if a brick falls on my head, I lose consciousness. What about that? All it means is that consciousness can no longer flow through your brain into this world.

It then has to withdraw and seek another channel. Consciousness is not affected. You cannot lose consciousness.

Isn't that amazing? Why not? Because you are consciousness.

It's the essence of who you are. So you can't lose yourself. Consciousness, you can also say life.

You can call it life. You can call it Tao. It's the unmanifested underlying, the timeless essence of all life, that which animates all life forms for brief periods, each form of brief period.

You are that. You can't think about that. If you think about it, it doesn't make sense.

You have to sense that in yourself. Now, sense that. You can't know it as an object of knowledge.

You can only know it as yourself, because it's the subject of all knowledge. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity.

Another word for serenity is stillness. All things return to the source out of which they have come, the life, the unmanifested one life. Returning to the source is stillness.

Now, the wonderful thing is we don't have to wait until we die to return to the source. To live a life that is filled with power and wisdom, we can return to the source before the body dies and live in a state of connectedness with the source of life. And that's why it says returning to the source is stillness.

When you find the stillness within yourself, you're returning to the source of all life. What is stillness? Just a moment when you're not thinking, but still conscious.

Just an inner space. Like now. Okay.

Ready for this? Shhh. Hear all your thoughts.

And now we go Shhh. And thoughts come creeping back. And then we go Shhh.

And suddenly there's a... Can you sense that there is a space inside you that's just conscious? Where you don't call yourself anything or call me anything.

You're returning to the source, to the formless, the timeless in you. If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow. If you don't realize the source in yourself, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

That's how most people live, unfortunately. Stumbling about, unconnected with who they are, disconnected from who they are, not realizing the source of their being. There is immediately there is confusion, which is mental confusion, the mind creating all kinds of pseudo-problems.

You yourself, you become a problem to yourself. You become a problem to others. You become a problem to the planet.

You become a problem or you contribute to the problem-making of the world. And that's the normal way to be. You stumble in confusion and that's confusion, and sorrow is the suffering that comes when you are not connected with that dimension in yourself, in your daily life.

You suffer. That's the destiny. That's what the Buddha said.

Life is suffering unless you go beyond suffering, which is the teaching. It shows you the way. Say as the Tao Te Ching does.

Confusion and sorrow, you can't get rid of it no matter how you try to rearrange your outer life or think if I achieve that or that I'll be fine. You won't. So you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

You need to find the source. And it's not even hidden. It's just there underneath the mental noise.

So when you realize the source, realize of course doesn't mean you have some kind of intellectual idea about it. Realize is when you have no idea. When the ideas, the importance of ideas diminishes and there's just a space of awareness.

Ideas are secondary. In fact you will have some interesting ideas coming out of that. Creative ideas, new ideas, new insights, but they are secondary.

When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king, immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you and when death comes, you are ready. Beautiful images explain who or what you become when you live in connectedness with that. No longer as a little entity that thinks itself to be separate from the universe and from other human beings and from everything.

You become tolerant, tolerant, disinterested, which means not uninterested, disinterested, amused. There's a little bit of amusement at all the things that people in this world feel is so serious and so important and all their fears and ambitions and all the things they run after. You then become a little bit amused at all this, what is called the turmoil of beings running around like little rabbits.

All this, I have so many problems to think about, oh my god, what's happening? Oh no, god. You become a little bit, you become amused a little, there's a slight smile, you don't, sometimes you might even laugh, but there's a slight little bit of a smile, because you know it's not ultimately real.

What they believe to be so important is ultimately not that real. It's a temporary thing. It's relatively real, not ultimately real.

In other words, everything is a little bit like a dream. For example, what happened to you yesterday? Where is it now?

A little bit like a dream. Whatever was important then, even breakfast this morning, okay, did I have breakfast or was it a dream? Not that much difference.

Or you come to the end of your life and suddenly you think back all those years, that was

a long dream. Was it a nightmare? And you become kind-hearted as a grandmother.

Nice image, the grandmother was already been through everything. It's a little bit like the big-bellied Buddha that you see, that is influenced, a Taoist-influenced Buddha, the Chinese big-bellied Buddha. He sits there.

Sometimes people who think they have lots of problems in their lives, I recommend that they should get a big-bellied Buddha and look at it quite often when they think they have problems. Because the Buddha, he's actually laughing, he has a huge belly and he always goes ... It's not serious.

It implies that he is connected with something deeper. He doesn't take the world that seriously. And so his influence is beneficial.

It's only people who take the world not that seriously they can actually be of benefit to the world and improve the world. But if you think that the world is absolutely serious, you're not going to improve it. You can just contribute to the madness.

You will be fighting one or somebody or some organization or some group of people. It's serious, serious. That little bit of detachment you become the Buddha, the big-bellied Buddha or the grandmother.

And dignified as a king with a certain dignity or integrity to who you are. The same dignity and integrity that each animal has that many humans have lost. One with itself.

I feel always when I look at a dog or a cat or a bird, whatever it is, it is one with itself, with who it is. It has enormous dignity. And then sometimes you can see the contrast if you look at a particularly silly human being.

And sometimes silly human beings have a dog that's very dignified. the only times when they get out of their silliness is when they pet their dog. For a moment, they can truly be themselves.

With all other people, they're playing some kind of silly roles, not knowing that they're playing roles. And then they come in. For a moment, their dog gives them the ability to relax for a moment and be who they are without pretending.

And that's why they don't know it. That's why they love their dog or their cat so much. Because they can be themselves.

They find themselves through that. That's the integrity of the animal. The dignity of the animal.

But it's in you also. This is a nice one about people who are in control of something, of an organization or country or whatever. How to rule a country or an organization.

When the master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is a leader who is loved. Next, one who is feared.

The worst is one who is despised. If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy. The master doesn't talk.

He acts. When his work is done, the people say, Amazing! We did it all by ourselves.

So the greatest ruler is not even aware that he or she is there. Hardly aware that he or she is there. Does not interfere.

Never says, Look at me. I did that. Identifying with their actions and taking credit for what they did.

I did that. Or arguing with somebody. You didn't do it.

I did that. That same thing can exist. This talks about having gone beyond ego and beyond mind and identification with action.

You also find this phenomenon in some very simple people who haven't developed an ego yet. They sometimes do wonderful things, but there's no entity that says, Look, I did that. Or how it feels, I did that.

Beautifully expressed in the film Forrest Gump, where the hero or the anti-hero does not have an ego. He is below ego. He helps many people and many good things come into his life, but he has no sense of a separate self.

He lives in the right way. Not what this describes, because this describes going beyond ego, but he hasn't arrived at ego yet, so he still lives in a sense of oneness. If you live in a sense of oneness, the universe to a large extent becomes helpful.

Helpful things come into your life because you are no longer separating yourself from life. That begins with being in a state of oneness with the present moment, accepting the moment as it is. That's really all you need to do.

Then you're in a state of oneness with life, not imposing anything on the present moment, judgments, reactions, and if they are there, accept that they are there. You can always accept what is, whatever level, either accept what is externally or accept what is internally. Now here's a very wonderful thing about how your state of consciousness affects the world, that there's a correlation between the collective consciousness of humanity and the state of the planet.

And there is a correlation between your state of consciousness and whatever happens to you. Not always apparent immediately, but there is a correlation between what's within you and what happens to you or what you attract into your life. And, furthermore, it's not so much that what happens to you is your fate or your destiny.

Your destiny is determined not by what happens to you, that's what people think, that what happens to me determines my life. Your life is determined, your destiny is determined by how you respond to what happens. And what happens next is determined by how you react or respond to what happens now.

So something seemingly bad happens, something goes wrong, if your reaction is negative, you attract the next negative thing. If your reaction is a response that says, well, this is how it is, now let's deal with that. The next thing will reflect that state of consciousness.

Many people are trapped their whole lives in a stream of same kind of unpleasant things happening continuously to them, because they don't realize at any given moment there is a freedom for them to change their lives by reacting differently to what happens. Your present reaction determines the future, not what happens. Your reaction to what happens determines the next moment.

That's how you can change your life rather than being trapped in bad karma for a very long time. Very easy, but it requires awareness. And here we talk, the Tao Te Ching talks about how the collective consciousness affects the planet.

In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious. The earth is solid and full. All creatures flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed.

When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy, the earth becomes depleted, the equilibrium crumbles, creatures become extinct. The master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole. His constant practice is humility.

He doesn't glitter like a jewel, but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as a stone. Beautiful images, when humans collectively live out of touch with the greater consciousness, the Tao, the transcendent, the reality, whatever they manifest externally, externally reflects that state of disconnectedness. And then the planet around them suffers.

It's simply a reflection of a state of consciousness. And so, this eternal principle he already saw 2,500 years ago. And that also implies that the solution to what is happening to the planet cannot be found exclusively on the external level.

Yes, of course we need to change things that we do on the external level, but unless the consciousness, the state of consciousness that is our habitual state changes, even if we remove one evil from somewhere out there, it will be replaced by some other thing that has the same harmful influence on nature and the planet. So the fundamental is the shift in consciousness in humans, in humanity, but not waiting for others to change. Humanity is you.

Humanity is I. You are humanity. The shift in consciousness needs to happen in you, and then the planet will be saved.

So that is vital. Here we have the two beautiful lines. The master, the master always means the enlightened being, the being in touch with the Tao.

Here he happens to use the he pronoun, but he changes continuously in this translation. Chinese doesn't differentiate apparently with the pronoun. Traditionally, it's always he in the old translation of the Tao Te Ching, but in this Stephen Mitchell translation he shifts continuously from he to she.

It happens to be he here, but it doesn't matter. The master views the parts with compassion because he understands the whole. He understands the whole, he's connected with the whole.

Then you can look upon the parts, the individual human beings and the many different life forms with compassion because you recognize them as expressions of, manifestations of the one life that you also are. Manifestations or expressions of the one consciousness that is the essence also of who you are. And you see it, you feel when you don't impose thoughts on, continuously impose thoughts on reality, but allow things to be, allow a flower to be with that spaciousness, spacious perception.

Shh, shh. Oh, a moment, another human being. That's compassion comes out of that state.

And compassion has a deeper level to it and that is the recognition of oneness. Out of that comes true compassion. The recognition that in essence you and I share a common source and consciousness.

Not just, not a source in the distant past, a source we share, a common source now. And that's not an intellectual thing. The realization comes the less you impose thoughts on other people, judgments, definitions.

And on yourself you start thinking about my life. What about my life? And then you define your life as either good or bad.

Fulfilling or unfulfilling. Satisfying or unsatisfying. And you have all kinds of opinions, all kinds of opinions about me and my life.

And you have a whole, a whole structure in your mind develops that you call my life. And for many people that mental consists of thoughts, all clinging together. They say, this is all part of the edifice of my life.

And it's here. And they all cling together and people think that's who they are. It's just thoughts about its definitions about them.

They're just thoughts. And when you don't know that, that cuts you off from who you, the power that is there underneath all that. The power of consciousness itself, of the Tao.

You're cut off and you live as if that thing were real and you try to somehow make it better on the level of the thought structure of my life. Or try to convince yourself that, oh, my life isn't that bad after all. And then you get a little bit of, okay, I'm feeling a little bit better today because I just had the thought that my life isn't so bad after all.

Or you see somebody who is suffering and say, oh, I'm better off than that person. And you have a little bit of happiness. My life isn't so bad.

Many people's lives are far worse than my life. Okay, I should feel good. Okay.

A little bit of feeling a little bit good for a few moments. But the structure of my life is not a satisfying one for almost anybody. If you don't go beyond that structure, you might think the people you read about in People magazine or wherever, are better off.

They're just as unhappy as everybody else. Because they, unless they've gone deeper, some may have. My life, it's a figment of the imagination.

There's no such thing as my life. I don't have a life. How can I have, what does that mean, I have a life?

I am life. I am an expression of the one life. The one consciousness, the Tao, expressing itself briefly through this form.

And the very power of all life is here. Why have some mental structure that gives me a sense of identity, that tells me who I am with definitions and judgments, and not good enough or better than? All kinds.

Unnecessary, as sometimes called in the Tao Te Ching, unnecessary baggage. Walking around with unnecessary baggage. My life is so heavy and it's hard, I have a hard life.

Where's your hard life at this moment? Can't see it. It's only when I start to think about it, oh, it's back, oh yeah.

But where is it ever now? It's an imaginary entity, the me that is up there, consisting of all kinds of thoughts and opinions, is an imaginary entity, unreal. It's wonderful to see that in this moment you don't have that baggage of my life, you are alive right now.

I don't need to define myself mentally as either good or bad, or better than, or success or failure. All that cuts you off from the power that's actually there, of the Tao. This is why it says, as we read earlier, empty yourself of everything it said, which means empty yourself of these ideas that otherwise dominate you, the ideas of who you are.

Jesus said the same thing. Almost literally to me it means exactly the same. Blessed are

the poor in spirit.

Poor in spirit, that means inside you do not carry baggage. The baggage of your thoughts, of who you are. So the same thing, blessed are the poor in spirit, means you are internally unencumbered by heavy thinking and identification and creating an image of who you think you are that becomes my life.

And then you even believe that you could lose your life. I'm going to lose, he lost his life. There must be, he must have been separate from life.

Who was he if not life? Without life he isn't. He couldn't have been.

You cannot be, you are life. You can't separate yourself from life and say I have a life. Who are you then?

Separate from life? What is other than life? Well, I that's life.

But you don't have it, you are it. Only the mind tells you that you have it. Insane.

But normal. Normal and insane. One more.

He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far. He who tries to shine doesn't shine.

Dims his own light. He who defines himself can't know who he really is. He who has power over others can't empower himself.

He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures. If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job then let go. He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.

Look at me. Me. My life.

Unhappy or look how miserable I am. Look how great I am. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

Always looking to the next thing. What do I have to do now? Always grasping for the next thought that I need to worry about.

And the next thing. Entire civilization stressed. Stressed out.

All disconnected from the Tao. They're all rushing ahead. No time for anything else.

No time. No time. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

You don't really reach anywhere. He who tries to shine dims his own light. By trying to play roles or identifying with yourself as special, look at me, you cut yourself off from the power of the Tao.

By not directing attention to yourself, the power comes through you. Not identifying with anything that you do because you don't do it. It's a pity in a way that I wish, sometimes it's a little joke, I wish I had written The Power of Now when I still had a big ego because now the ego would feel so great, me, me.

But then of course The Power of Now couldn't have come through the ego. And here, important, he who defines himself can't know who he really is. This is what we were talking about, these constant definitions of who you are in your mind.

Why not just be the consciousness, be the presence right now? That's where the power is. What a wonderful teaching.

Timeless. It helps of course to have a translation that makes it more accessible by somebody who is deeply in tune with that state of consciousness. Traditionally the Tao Te Ching has been always translated by academics who had a wonderful knowledge and command of ancient Chinese but absolutely no idea of the spiritual dimension.

The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, stillness. We started with it, we end with it, moment of stillness. Somebody sent me a little poem which I came across the other day and I'd like to read it to you.

It's by Harvey Cohen, thank you very much. Although somebody else sent it to me. The title of the poem is The Bottom Line and it goes like this.

So you've dabbled in the occult, burned candles, gave up sex. You've traveled to Sedona to visit the vortex. You've meditated, visualized, affirmed with love and grace.

You've forgiven all your irritants till you're blue in the face. You've been ested and you have tested tarot and astrology. You've met your guides from the other side and did past life therapy.

So you've been roved and hypnotized, there's nothing you've avoided. You've tried acupuncture, heavy breathing, even been Sigmund Freud-ed. You've chanted mantras and you've armed and journeyed near and far.

You've seen many of the channels and taken every seminar. You've floated in a tank and have gone to the psychic route. You've had your cards and wrinkles read, did primal scream to shout.

You burn incense in the afternoon, sometimes reflex your feet. You've become a vegetarian and you very seldom cheat. You gave up salt and sugar and your diet's really pure.

Although at times you still get gas, just why, you're not sure. You drink herb tea until you see the best in all at last. Your Kundalini straightened and no longer at half-mast.

You've had your aura cleaned and your chakras looped and tuned. You've seen E.T., that's the movie, at least four times and two times for cocoon. You go to sleep with crystals and you wake up with a tape that subliminally instructs you to get your mind in shape.

You've gone here and there and everywhere, tried everything you know. The past that's called enlightenment is such a busy show. But after all that's said and done and all the things you've tried, there is a truth that you should know while you are on your ride.

The light you see that seems to be coming from the things you do is only as bright as is the light that radiates from you. We need to understand a few basic things about this. And I'd like to remind you of something that's already been written in *The Power of Now*.

And that is that your life consists of what you call your life is usually your life situation. Your life consists of your life situation which is your job, your financial situation, your relationships, your living situation, your health situation, whether you are young or old, or whatever is happening in your life. All that makes up your life situation.

And for most people that's all there is. They don't know anything else. Their whole life consists of what they call my life.

When they refer to my life they are talking about their life situation. And in *The Power of Now* I differentiate between your life situation which is one level and a more fundamental level that I call your life. We are going to talk about these two levels today at a time when for many people their life situation is becoming challenging.

They are encountering new limitations suddenly coming into their life situation. The only difference between our present situation and the situation in the world and what normally happens is that many people experience similar things at the same time. So many people at the present time experience some form of challenge or limitation coming into their life as many of the structures, the external structures in the world are becoming shaky and some have collapsed already as you may remember from a new earth.

I speak about the collapse of Soviet communism which nobody could have predicted and I speak of the impending collapse of many of the structures that are ego based, that are an external reflection of an inner state of consciousness that is the ego. And those structures which of course includes financial structures and so on are now beginning to collapse and something totally new will arise. How long this collapse will take I cannot say.

But everybody can clearly see and even the experts are talking about a very much systemic I hear this word on the radio a systemic crisis or something like that. In other words the crisis is not to do with this or that on the surface of things but concerns the

very structure of these organizations. In the same sense that the human mind the problems of the human mind have not to do with content of whatever is the content of your mind but the very structure of the mind, the human mind that needs to change.

So for many people limitation in one form or another is coming into their life situation and that is actually not what the media wants us to believe that these things are dreadful. The challenge that many people are encountering at this time is actually the that which will push them into a new state of consciousness. That is the possibility that is the promise whenever you encounter a crisis situation whether it's personal or collective there is the opening into a new way of being.

The possibility. It doesn't mean that everybody will embrace that possibility. So we need to first of all see not believe what we are told in the media that we should be in a state of fear.

That the only real response the only natural response to what's happening is a state of fear. That is an unconscious response. We need to see that change is absolutely necessary in this world and the dissolution of many of the ego based structures is absolutely necessary for the planet to survive and for humanity to survive.

So what's happening is not dreadfully bad. What's happening needs to happen. The totality the intelligence behind phenomena is doing it.

So it is a good thing and if challenges come into your life which might mean limitation financial limitation. You may have to move somewhere else. You may have to downgrade.

Uncertainty may come into your life. Oh! That shouldn't be happening.

I should know what's going to happen for the next 20, 30 years of my life. Well, you don't know anymore. And that is wonderful that there is suddenly an opening into uncertainty.

So is it possible for you to embrace uncertainty and not demand that you should know what's going to happen to you in your life situation. To embrace not knowing. To embrace uncertainty.

And to embrace, yes, there are difficulties, there are challenging situations, but that is part of being here on this planet in this form. I'd like to remind you of there's a book called *The Road Less Travelled* and I never got to read the whole book. I basically got stuck on the first two sentences of the book and those first two sentences of the book were so good that you didn't need to read anymore.

I don't know whether that's a good thing for an author to write such a good book that all you need is the first two sentences and if you don't get that you can still read the rest of the book, but if you get that well, so the first sentence is life is difficult. Okay. And the

second sentence, I don't know literally, but it says something like, and if you know that life is difficult and you accept that life is difficult it's no longer difficult.

It's only difficult if you say it shouldn't be. But if you go with yes, the uncertainty, this is part of being here in this form, there is continuous uncertainty and the certainty, the rigidity of things is an illusion. The certainty that all these structures are solid and you can sometimes see it that the world trade center looked very solid and gone.

And all the structures, the big banks, they looked so solid nothing could possibly happen there, they are forever. And within a few weeks they're beginning to crumble. Soviet communism, nothing looked more solid than Soviet communism.

You say, this is so rigid, it can't possibly, it must at least survive for another thousand years. The rigidity of it and the people who embodied that is a it's not going to move. When you saw the Soviet rulers greeting the military parades huge tanks and rockets going past nothing can be more solid than that and within a year it collapsed.

The whole thing collapsed. Now one good thing of course about traveling to India is that there the external reality is a little bit less solid than in the West. So you're less likely to delude yourself that you live in a solid reality that can be controlled or that you can be in control of.

There you see the structures are actually a bit shaky everywhere. And even if you go into a luxury hotel you never know what's going to happen. So we are learning to go with the flow of things as the expression goes and the flow of things is fluid.

It's not a continuous change. Something new is arising and why demand that you should, there should be certainty in your life. Be open to uncertainty and see how empowering that actually is and not say okay but what about my pension plan?

What the mutual funds? I had saved all my life and now look I got the statement I lost 50% of it. Yes.

So but you're still here. That's your life situation. Whatever happens that's your life situation and you may remember a year ago you were looking at your mutual funds and said wow it's made so much money.

[Speaker 5] (7:13:23 - 7:13:24)

It's great.

[Speaker 1] (7:13:25 - 7:58:36)

It feels good and then you look at it again. Okay now I can relax now. And then you relax and then the next one comes and says oh my god life is difficult.

Things are dissolving and see if you resist internally what is happening as the media teaches you to do then of course you resist the flow, you resist the arising of the new. The arising of the new state of consciousness primarily in you and eventually the arising of new external expressions of that state of consciousness. A new world.

We don't need to be concerned about that. That comes of itself. What we need to be concerned about is to be open to this transformation.

To be open to not knowing. So there's our life situation and it's interesting. There may be interesting changes happening in our life situation and we say it's fine whatever change comes you look at the situation and see yes oh suddenly a limitation is coming into my life.

I lost my job and my investments are not worth that much anymore. Okay then how can you overcome these limitations? Limitations can be overcome always on two levels.

There is the external limitations. Limitations can be overcome on an external level and other limitations can only be overcome on an inner level. So you need to see whatever situation you encounter in your life is there anything I can do to overcome these limitations.

It might involve moving somewhere else where you don't have a huge mortgage anymore. It might involve moving to a different location. It might involve finding a different job or thinking outside of the box and doing something totally different you never even thought of.

Of thinking creatively. So whatever limitation you encounter in your life you look at first of all at the externals of the situation. Is there anything I can do and then you become still and then you start thinking again and you look at the situation what are the possibilities then you become still again then you look again you think or you talk to someone and then you go back into stillness and that process may take a while not necessarily just a day of looking what it is what is it that I can do and going within where you are not looking for anything but become comfortable with what is here and now and when you become comfortable with what is here and now you are stepping out of your life situation into life.

Life is now. Life has nothing to do with what's going on in your life. It has nothing to do with past and future or what your relationships are or what your financial situation is or your living situation is or even your health situation is.

That's all your life situation. That is not life. Your life situation exists in time.

Past and future. Life is now. So it is vital that you learn to step out of your life situation so that periodically so that your life situation does not absorb your entire attention continuously because if it does, it will drain you and eat you up because you'll have

continuous stuff to think about.

One problem after another in my life situation. Do you think, oh now I have to worry about that problem and that and you're thinking about there's a continuous succession of problems that I need to worry about and if I don't worry about it, it's all going to collapse totally even worse than it has done so already. I need to be responsible and worry.

You're being eaten up by your life situation. Your mind it comes down to your mind because your mind gives power to your life situation. The continuous involuntary mind activity really is your life situation.

If you don't think about your life situation, there is no life situation. What situation? You step out of that periodically vital to learn that and come into life and then the mind says, what do you mean by life?

Okay, let's see where that is, that life. You step out of time your attention you remove your attention from past and future, okay? How do you do that?

Well, a little help would be what about now? What's wrong with now? Do I have a problem now?

Now? Of course I have a problem now. Look at my bank statement.

Of course I have a problem now. I need to move by the end of the month. I'm not talking about the end of the month or what's going to happen to your mutual funds.

I'm talking about do you have a problem now? No. I can't see any.

I'm trying hard to find a problem in this moment. Well, there's a stain. No, there isn't.

I'm just saying there's a stain here. Is that a problem? No, it's a stain.

Okay. I have a backache. I don't.

It's just an example. I have a backache. Is that a problem?

Only if you start thinking about it and saying, am I going to have to live with that for the rest of my life? Or why do you always have a backache? I wonder what's wrong with me?

No, it's not a problem. It's a backache. It's just that.

You stay with what is now. Don't spin some stories about what is now. Don't judge it, compare it, say it shouldn't be.

You come into now. The first level of now is whatever is around you. That's only level one.

Level one of now is your sense perceptions. Wow. That's already a revelation.

When you step out of being totally possessed, eaten up, eaten alive by your life situation, and you step out of that into even just becoming aware of sense perceptions, you're entering the now, because you can only perceive now. And you're not perceiving any problem. You're perceiving what is now.

Sense perceptions, this room, the people, the incredible variety of human forms. Amazing to see. Every human form is different and unique in some way.

It's beautiful. You can sit in a public place and be in the now and watch people. Nothing to do with your life situation.

You're there as a presence watching, perceiving this moment. The incredible fullness of this moment around you in the form of life forms, human life forms, animal life forms, plant life forms, the air, the incredible forms and shapes that are continuously moving the spectacle of phenomena. Unbelievable variety.

It's fantastic. And you have no idea that this is going on around you when you're totally trapped in your life situation, which really is your mind. So we are learning periodically to step out of that level that I call life situation and enter life.

Life is now. This was level one of now, what is around you. Be alert to that.

Because otherwise you miss the whole thing because you're so concerned about your conceptual reality, which really is what a life situation is. You're so concerned about your conceptual reality that you miss reality. Your conceptual reality eats up your entire attention continuously and you're worrying about your life, which in reality is your life situation, but you call it your life.

It's not life at all. And so this is a dreadful fate for a person to be consumed by their life situation. And so they miss the life.

They're trying to find the life, the fullness of life, in their life situation and they're hoping that they can eventually sort out their life situation so that they can find life. But if your life situation is all you have, you're never going to find life because your life situation is a set of thoughts and concepts in your head. To become empowered, you need to rise, one could say you rise above your life situation, which doesn't mean you don't deal with things anymore.

You still deal with things, but you realize there is a level or a dimension to you that is far more powerful and vital than whatever is happening in your life. So accessing that dimension is vital and that really is what spirituality is all about, not having some weird ideas about this or that or beliefs. It's nothing to do with ideas.

It's nothing to do with concepts. There's no such thing as spiritual concepts. Concepts are not spiritual.

They're not even spiritual thoughts. There's no such thing as a spiritual thought. A thought is not spiritual because thought is form.

Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself. Level one, then, whatever surrounds you. You can say, yeah, but this is still form too.

Yes, it's form too, but it's not a mind form. It's not a conceptual form. It's what is here in the world in terms of physical forms.

Be open to that. Level one of the now. Level two of the now, don't get attached to the numbers.

I'm just saying two. Level two of the now is feeling that you're alive. Level two is so your attention was on what is around you.

The world is multifaceted. There's incredible play of phenomena all around you and you acknowledge that and it's beautiful. It has nothing to do with what your relationships are doing at the moment or what your bank statements are doing at the moment or whether you have a job or you don't have a job or whether your wife has just left you or their husband has done this or whether you're...

Nothing to do with any of that. You're stepping out into presence. Level two of presence is to feel that you're alive inside.

You've already noticed that the world around you is alive. That's a big step forward. You have noticed that the world around you is vitally alive.

To notice that, you need to have stepped out of your life situation, your conceptual reality. Wow. Okay.

You breathe. It's beautiful. The play of forms.

Then you feel that you inside are alive. Your body is alive. You feel the aliveness in your hands, your arms, your legs and the totality of aliveness, the global aliveness inside in the background and you can still look around and see the incredible aliveness around you.

If you feel the body inside, you're already moving to an even more vital dimension than the vitality of life forms. There's your body. It feels good to be embodied, to sense the aliveness even in an everyday situation.

When you're listening to the news and say something dreadful has just happened, there will be negative growth next year in the economy. Negative growth. What does that

mean?

We are now officially in a recession. Oh my God. We are going to buy less at Christmas.

Oh no. We are not going to run around like mad rabbits this Christmas. Oh, that's dreadful.

So even when you listen to the news, I'm exaggerating a little, but there's some truth in it. Even when you listen to the news, you can feel the aliveness within while they're saying we are now officially in a recession. The entire automobile industry of the United States may collapse and drag everybody else down.

And you feel the aliveness inside. So there you have something more vital than that. And if you are part of the automobile industry of the United States, and if it affects you directly or indirectly, when the situation arises externally, then you will deal with it.

You will address it in the now. And you accept whatever is, and you look at it, okay. What is it that I can do?

And then you go into life. Then you go out again and look at your situation. And you go back.

Find the balance between dealing with your life situation and entering life. So level two said the aliveness in the body while you listen to the news, for example, or while the phone rings and somebody says, oh dear, we need to do something. Well, if anybody comes to you and says, we need to do something, you step out of the life situation and become present where there are no problems.

So you can hang on to your inner body and then an even deeper level of your life situation, because they are all connected, they are ultimately all one. At the deepest level, the one that contains it all is the realization that underneath it all, who you are is not the thoughts that go through your head or whatever is happening externally, but you can actually sense within yourself that you are that in which all the phenomena appear. That's the deepest level of life.

Life is the consciousness that you are. The I, the I am. You attach nothing else to I am.

The I am is the deepest, who you are in your innermost identity that is consciousness. It is formless. It is the light in which everything appears.

And to feel yourself even at this moment, to feel that nothing that can be defined is who you are. Nothing that can be thought is who you are. Nothing that happens around you has anything ultimately to do with who you are in your essence.

Success or failure ultimately has nothing to do with who you are. Success cannot give you your true reality. Failure, success is not who you are.

It's all the play of forms. It's all to do with time. It's your life situation.

Stepping out of that, into the power and the fullness of the present moment, where you know yourself as consciousness itself. Another word you could use as a pointer is to realize the stillness within yourself. Consciousness is still, alive, vibrant, but still.

Underneath all the things that are happening externally and internally in your mind and your emotional field, you remain as that. And that can be in any situation when you are the master, the spiritual master knows him or herself as consciousness in any external situation. You can actually sense a spaciousness inside you, no matter what's happening.

And even while you're thinking, well, you're going to think much less because there's no reason to think totally unnecessary things all the time. To sense always in the background the I am, the stillness, that which is precious, something very precious, indestructible. And sometimes you may need to encounter a life-threatening challenge that suddenly comes in to sense that.

But whenever a form in your life begins to dissolve or collapse, there's a greater chance to discover within yourself that which is beyond form. So let's say the entire stock market collapses and then you get your statement and it says zero. That moment of looking at your balance and you say your mutual funds have gone from \$500,000 to \$5.

So this form that was important to you has dissolved. And you look at that and instead of resisting, because this is what is, ultimately it's only a figure on a piece of paper. Only when you start thinking does it become a big problem.

But the reality of it is you're opening this thing, you're taking it out of the envelope and you're reading and there is little scribbles, computer printout, which has a little figure on it. And that's all that it is in the reality of the present moment. Unless you make a problem out of it and start thinking what's going to happen to me in the future?

How am I going to survive in my old age? I've worked for nothing, 30 years of work for nothing. What does all that mean?

It means it's a story around the simplicity of a figure on a piece of paper. And then once you are trapped in that you're lost. So to see very clearly this is the master, you're becoming a master when you just see the simplicity of any moment without going into spinning stories around me, my past, my future.

It was all in vain, I failed, it's all been pointless, I'm never going to make money again. What's my... All mind stories, mind created stories.

So the solution to your financial or other problems is stepping out as much as you can into the aliveness of the present moment which is who you are in your essence. You are the now in which everything happens, the consciousness in which everything unfolds,

the timeless space, and then look at the situation. So you're coming from a...

you're rooted in a deeper place and then you're dealing with the externals. But always be very careful because the externals have a pulling power and you're living in a world that's totally hypnotized by the externals and in a world that continuously tells you how important the external is and every time you listen to somebody say, this is so important, you should be worried, you should be in fear, you should think about this, let's discuss it. And the world has this pulling power.

So you need to realize everybody's hypnotized into believing that this is all that there is and this is absolutely serious and important. It is important perhaps, but it is only relatively important. It is not of absolute importance.

Of absolute importance is finding the essence of who you are and then deal with things from there so that a different energy flows into, even into what you do, so the two are not separate. Even your so-called life situation changes, is affected by the power of life itself when you are aware of that in yourself. So a different level of consciousness flows into what you do.

A different energy flows into what you do when you realize that whatever you do is at best only relatively important. Whatever happens is relative. The only one thing is absolute and that is finding life or as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life, which has nothing to do with your life situation.

And the strange thing is the life situation tends to unfold with greater ease when you are connected with something, that dimension that is deeper than life situations. And then even on the external level of your life situation things happen more lightly, more easily. And that's the beauty of it and this is the practice then and no better opportunity than the present time when you are being challenged rather than being deluded for a few more years that all is well when it isn't because eventually things are going to dissolve around you anyway and if they dissolve, don't dissolve around you, then you dissolve before they do.

So it's better to see that fact now than wait until you are 92 years old. You may not be that alert anymore to find the reality of who you are and the reality underneath phenomena. So here's the mastery of life is to live in two dimensions simultaneously and then see what happens.

You are practicing then every moment and whatever situation that arises in your life becomes a practice for staying present within that situation, to feel the depth of who you are, the power of now, the power of consciousness as you deal with things. So this is what it means to become empowered. That's what everybody wants, but they are looking for it where they can't find it.

They are looking for some power in their external life situation. The power must come from within. It does not come from your thoughts or from whatever happens out here.

So another way of putting this is look at whatever limitations arise in your life. Let's say you're trapped somewhere in some unpleasant situation or place and you want to get out. Look at the situation.

What is it that I can do? Or perhaps there's nothing you can do for right now. It's a beautiful thing to see at this present moment there's nothing I can do.

I can't even pick up the phone. It's Sunday today. I can't call anybody.

Nobody's at work. There's nothing I can do except be with what is. Stay.

The next day action arises. Not losing yourself in the action. Another important thing because it's very easy once you start to speak and to act you totally lose yourself in that.

You will get stressed. The slightest stress means you've lost yourself in your life situation again. It is possible to deal with things effectively without stress.

Just be more powerful than the situation. For most people the situation is always more powerful than they. So they feel smaller than the situation.

That's normal. And that's a delusion because it all arises from consciousness. So you are actually far more powerful.

The power of who you are is far greater than anything external. But people don't know that. So they are always reacting to something, defending themselves against this or that.

Realizing that the situation actually has very little power. And if your state of consciousness changes external reality reflects the change. This does not mean that anything remains absolutely solid in external reality.

It still is subject to continuous fluctuations so you don't attach yourself to anything. But it's beautiful to see that external reality reflects basically your predominant inner state. If your inner state is empowered and it can only be empowered when you are not lost in your life situation then the empowerment is reflected around you.

And it may come in many forms. It may come as financial abundance. It may come as anything any form that the aliveness can take.

So it's an incredible thing to discover that you are actually more powerful than the world around you. Not in the narrow egoic sense that you say I can control everything that happens. No.

So this is a wonderful opportunity now to experiment with consciousness with your life situation and your life. Where is the life at this moment? Do you feel the aliveness of this moment?

And then the universe uses you because it is going somewhere there is an evolutionary impulse at work on this planet and everywhere else because if it's happening here it's happening everywhere as above so below then the consciousness that wants to come into this world can freely flow through you and express itself. How? In many different ways according to your particular form.

It might be some enlightened business. It may be that you are producing something that affects many people and brings that consciousness to others through some artistic creation or this or that innumerable possibilities how you can be an opening for the evolutionary impulse of the universe that wants to come through and then wherever you go people will be affected by this transformed energy. You cannot not affect the world when you live in the new state of consciousness whoever you come into contact with is affected by that.

Even if you were a hermit you would still affect the collective consciousness. If you are a frequency holder as I call it in a new earth, a frequency holder is somebody who is not very interested in going out into the world and changing the world or building up some huge great organization to make the world a better place or to create a great work of art or to come up with some new discovery or write a great book not that there is anything wrong with these things. For some people that is their life purpose but there are some other people who are not drawn to that, who are content with remaining in a relatively small circle of influence a little, maybe just contemplatives is the old word for those people, people who feel they don't want to go out there and change the world, they just want to be present.

And that's fine because they hold the frequency of that state of consciousness because whatever state of consciousness you are in affects the totality of consciousness, is part of the totality of consciousness. So I was a frequency holder for a large part of my life never very interested in going out into the world and achieving the great things I was kind of happy being withdrawn and until something came into my life and I felt that there's more that I can do that was a thought that came I was doing little work workshops with people ten people at a time fifteen people for a number of years giving talks in people's living rooms and then it was fine in many ways I felt happy being a semi-hermit and occasionally going out and doing little things happy not being famous, I never thought I would want to be famous but then a thought came I could do so much more in this world but it doesn't seem to be happening and one day I sat under an oak tree you could call this there's a question later on we'll have some questions someone is asking a question about divine discontent the question is do you ever experience what might be called divine discontent that is the discontent that leads to something very

positive and you could say there was a moment that came at that time when I experienced a mild form of divine discontent which simply is a sense of there's more than I can do, that I could do but it's not happening that's a mild form of divine discontent it's not some unhappiness oh I have failed, I'm in my forties and what have I achieved that's not divine discontent that's just a form of normal unhappiness with divine discontent there is not some lot of mind activity around me and my life there's just a sense of my present life situation has these limitations around me but I could go beyond that, I could be much vaster, the world needs what I what I know comes through me, I know that the world needs that, so why isn't the world, I'm speaking for some of you too why isn't the world opening up these channels for me so that was the divine discontent, so I sat under an oak tree in Somerset where I would sometimes go magnificent oak tree and I said to the universe which ultimately to myself please use me I was talking to myself ultimately so because I am that please use me I'm here, so I was a frequency holder and yet after many years of a frequency holder I had this sense of okay, now expansion is what is called for in this world a moment of divine discontent please use me I didn't hear any answer and then I said something that some years later I almost said maybe I said too much I said I want acceleration okay, and then I went home and nothing happened for a few months I didn't know that while nothing was happening for a few months in my little cottage in Somerset somebody there don't take it literally the countdown has already started like the rocket ship which goes 10 9 8, 7, 6 and then one day I woke up and said I have to move I have to move to the west coast of North America and that was the beginning and so the rocket ship had taken off suddenly and finally I landed at the the desk of Oprah a few years later I never wanted to say that much it's too much and then the lesson was to surrender to that it wasn't too much it was what was needed if I had been stuck to some previous idea that I had about how my life should unfold I would be saying oh I'm overwhelmed it's too much surrender now to what is now surrender to this enormous energy stream that's coming through you asked for it you said acceleration and there it is and continuously even in this my life many people believe my life situation must be wonderful in many ways it is but no life situation is totally satisfying and there are always things that happen and change there is no ultimate certainty in any life situation you cannot derive long lasting satisfaction from any life situation even if you become famous I can tell you that now the life situation has not the power to satisfy you for long the satisfaction needs to be found in life and life is now and if you find that then your life situation is fine it unfolds and becomes empowered probably so don't expect your life situation does not have the power to make you fulfilled and it does ultimately not have the power to make you feel unfulfilled you have to go deeper where you are bigger than that although there was this divine discontent for a little moment I'm certainly not happier or more fulfilled now than I was when I, as one magazine said Eckhart Tolle suddenly emerged from complete obscurity so when I lived in complete obscurity I didn't know I was in complete obscurity

[Speaker 5] (7:58:36 - 7:58:36)

but

[Speaker 1] (7:58:39 - 8:01:47)

I was not less happy than I am now the state is the same so it is fulfilling to see that consciousness is evolving through this form, yes but there's no there's no increased happiness through that the happiness was already there basically the sense of, because I was deeply rooted, as I still am, in life life is always more vital to me than the life situation I've always going, even now I'm always a little bit out of balance, even now, although great things are happening but I'm not recommending that to anybody I'm just saying I'm a little bit out of balance because I'm always more vitally drawn to the present moment and the aliveness of that than whatever I have to deal with on an external level, so I'm always going a little bit too much so sometimes it's a little bit chaotic around me because I don't deal with everything if I dealt with everything I would lose, I would become stressed it's just too much so many things just put aside and then after a few months they're not a problem anymore because the situation has changed and I don't do anything when I feel I'm not enjoying it anymore stop, what's the point what is the point in doing something that you cannot enjoy but don't be don't prematurely say ok, I definitely can't enjoy this see if you can connect with the power of now and then do whatever you do so don't immediately say well, this, what I'm doing definitely I could never enjoy maybe, maybe not just try connecting stepping out of the situation into the power of now and then do perhaps you can enjoy it and if you still can't, then go and do something else but no compromise, don't live with unhappiness or with continuous stress or frustration that is dreadful way to live the large part of the world lives like that so what a wonderful challenge here and whatever comes where it's a life situation and the challenges of your life situation, they draw out that which is deeper so without the challenges you would be comfortably sitting in your armchair for the next 30 years or until you retire and watching your investments grow and grow and then drop dead laughter laughter

[Speaker 5] (8:01:47 - 8:01:49)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:01:51 - 8:02:11)

and you would live with complete certainty that you're being looked after because you've got your life insurance and your investments are growing every year and nothing can possibly go wrong and there's nothing okay, everything is great watch TV every day for five hours

[Speaker 5] (8:02:15 - 8:02:17)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:02:17 - 8:02:18)

and that's it

[Speaker 5] (8:02:18 - 8:02:19)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:02:24 - 8:04:34)

no evolution, no flowering of consciousness and then there's somebody else who made a total mess of his or her life and ends up in prison and sits there for 20 years and suddenly wakes up in the midst of that and realizes I am alive and the situation is just relatively unimportant to feel that who I am in my essence is beyond any limitation on the external level so that's why I often get letters from people in prison that say I have woken up in prison I'm free I'm no longer unhappy and I have another 20 years to do nor I'm not unhappy anymore I rarely get people I get letters from people who say I've woken up because my investments are growing every year laughter laughter laughter in fact I've never had a letter laughter laughter laughter sometimes I get letters from people who wake up because they encounter some physical illness and often change happens then any challenge has the opportunity to wake up if you're not being challenged by life then wait it'll come

[Speaker 5] (8:04:35 - 8:04:35)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:04:41 - 8:50:28)

now isn't that wonderful that means whatever happens now it's no longer some problem that comes into your life, it's a challenge it's not a dreadful thing it's great it's an opportunity to be more conscious more present with what is so that brings us back to the first two lines of that book life is difficult of course it's full of challenges but once you know that and say that's what it is, that's life then it's no longer difficult it just is what is it only remains difficult if you have the idea stuck in your head that it shouldn't be laughter it's a paradox life is difficult and once you know that it's difficult it's no longer difficult knowing that it's difficult implies accepting that it's difficult, but to say it is difficult only when you resist life so what this implies is when the resistance goes then it's no longer called difficult it's challenging and every challenge brings increased aliveness my friend Steve who is here can testify to that because he was faced with a challenge recently of being stuck in a hotel room in Bombay with mad terrorists running all around the building for several days and he went deep inside wasn't difficult for him because he was already immersed in presence for many years so he was able to step out of the situation which certainly could be called difficult and go deep within into the power of the present moment into consciousness itself well it's wonderfully still in here

usually in these places you have some background air conditioning sound but here you just have stillness so we can start by noticing that it is still in this room and of course the moment you notice that it is still outside you are still inside you have to be still for a moment to even notice that there is silence outside so it's already a meditation to notice that there is stillness you can do it in the middle of the night if you wake up it's usually the most silent time when most people are asleep and you simply notice that it is silent in the room or outside and you cannot notice it by thinking about it that's the wonderful thing to notice that it is silent you have to become silent inside so there is already a shift in consciousness but the simple fact of becoming aware that there is silence around you you have become silent within which means for a moment the stream of thinking has subsided but you haven't gone to sleep you are alert awake there isn't space that has opened up inside you and I would say that the silence is part of nature also because wherever you go in nature and we'll be talking about that or there may be sounds, nature has all kinds of sounds, produces all kinds of sounds from animals to the wind, to the rain to the flowing water and so on there's always also the deeper dimension of silence so if you walk in a forest for example you hear all kinds of subtle sounds but underneath all the subtle sounds in the forest there is an all pervasive silence also now if you go into the forest only with your mind then you will only notice the sounds and what the mind will try to interpret oh that's such and such a bird that's that, it will label so that's fine you might think you are present in the forest but you're not really you're simply judging what you hear but if you become aware of the the silent dimension underneath the sounds and in between the sounds then you become present because the moment you become aware of the silence you also have become silent the mind has become still in that moment where you notice oh there's silence in that moment you are silent not perhaps when you say it then it's also you're already back in words but before you say it so you are able to notice it that means a space has opened up inside you, a space of awareness of presence, of no thought of a shift in consciousness in fact it doesn't matter if it only lasted for two seconds, it was there a shift and you can't really remember it you can't memorize it it's not memorable because in that space of silence nothing is happening, the silence itself is eventless all events take place in the silence but the silence itself or the inner stillness itself is eventless and this is why I sometimes say these talks that you listen to are not interesting because the interesting means mind stuff what really matters about us being together here is that we enter the deeper dimension together and that deeper dimension of still presence is not interesting because it's not differentiated you can't say there are not bits and pieces oh look at that, oh look at that in the same way that the sunset is not interesting or the sunrise it's too vast, it's too awesome you can't say oh that's an interesting sunrise no you just go wow there's nothing, it's not, it's beyond interesting it's deeper than interesting it's deeper than the mind can analyze the moment the mind starts analyzing you have reduced it and there is a place for that also but that's not the vastness of being there is a place for analysis but if you're lost in analysis, continuous compulsive judgment and analysis then well life becomes impoverished you're lost then in the mind so you have to be able to

use the power of analysis of the mind yes but not be used by it and then you can have thoughts, of course you have thoughts, you're not going to be totally free of thoughts but the important thing is you then have a thought but the thought doesn't have you because it's terrible to be had by a thought I have to remember as we sit here and I talk to this wonderful intimate group which I had years ago I had meetings like this in living rooms that was wonderful and then the groups became too big and now we have something strange we have a little group here and a vast group of people that I actually don't see but we attempt to connect on the unseen where the lens of the camera is there are thousands of people apparently behind that lens but basically only one person that one there it's really only addressing one human being one I and so that the whole subject matter of our gathering is to connect more deeply with yourself and we may be talking about nature but really we're talking about yourself to go deeper so that you have a very deep connection with who you are beyond the movement of thought so that your identity is not derived from the movement of thought any longer you can still think but your thoughts are no longer telling you who you are opinions about who you are which then translates of course also into opinions about other people and so you can relate more deeply to others when you're present but first you need to find that depth in yourself and we'll see today how nature can help us with that once you found the depth within yourself all your relationships deepen, they have an added dimension and you can then see that relationships that do not have the dimension of depth are very surface phenomena there's no true relationship it's just two mind made entities two minds are bouncing off each other with their opinions and mental positions and so on and even if they're talking about something deep it's unlikely it will be deep even if it sounds deep it won't really be deep because the depth doesn't come from the words now you may I don't know if each one of you perhaps remember something that I remember I don't often talk about the past but I'll just bring it in just one little memory now because it's relevant to this moment what we're saying now and perhaps you have a similar memory I have a memory of being 10, 11 and 12 years old and being mostly unhappy as a child because of I was unhappy at school didn't like that at all at home my parents were usually in conflict so there was no peace there and if there was peace I knew it was only a brief interval between conflict so even when there was no conflict for a day or two I knew it was like walking on through a minefield and so that's the case of course perhaps some of you had a similar experience and there's nobody to blame it's just people act according to their conditioning and level of consciousness nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness so you can't really blame anybody of course they suffer their consequences yes but that's another matter so I was basically an unhappy child but I was given a bicycle at the age of 10 and we lived in a city but it was only a short bike ride 15 minutes or so out of the city and that was my salvation and I would quite often occasionally even I just didn't go to school I just said goodbye I'm going to school and then I went off into the country and then I reached the outskirts of the city not particularly overpowering landscape of exceptional beauty just ordinary some wheat fields occasionally groups of trees groves hedges but it was nature and I would slow

down on my bike and very slowly and start to look I looked at and I listened to the wind and the leaves and birds and I slowed down and then every time I did that I a burden so I was shedding a burden and a sentence would repeat itself in my mind and it's a strange thing that's I didn't know why I didn't even question why I thought this particular sentence and that sentence was this will always be here and it kept repeating this will always be here this will always be here I later years later I remember that I realized that sentence must have meant that I must have realized that there's the man-made dimension and there is nature and nature compared to the man-made world is virtually timeless there's a the time spans in nature are virtually infinite compared to the short-lived man-made things so I there was what I actually experienced at that time was transcendence through nature transcendence of my personal condition the narrow suffering condition so nature enabled me to experience that the transcendence of a different dimension that is beyond the man-made world and perhaps some of you have similar memories when you were a child how you related to nature or how nature helped you or gave you a sense of support and I believe there aren't many children nowadays that are actually deprived of that unfortunately because because they are so captivated by their electronic gadgets and computer screens and so on that their main attention is in this world of little screens so it's important for every parent to encourage children to experience nature vitally important for their well-being as it is for every human being too for every adult now there may be one or two people being with us here there who perhaps are stuck somewhere in a room and can't get out because of physical disability or they may be in prison and they say what can I do, what can we do we can't get out into nature well you need to remember that your body also is nature so you can start there every time you take a breath that's nature nature is breathing the air that you are breathing is nature the very fact of breathing is a natural process it's not choice it's done for you, it's not so much that you breathe, although we say I breathe but you're not the body breathes so it's a natural thing that happens you wouldn't say I'm beating my heart you don't do that, but that's the same thing the body does it it's a natural process for some reason we say I'm breathing because breathing is semi- voluntary you can stop it for a while but not for that long, because if you stop it for too long nature takes over so nature takes you live with nature with your body so even if you can't get out you can start by being aware of that level of yourself the physical level the natural part of who you are the body and not just by saying okay I'm looking at my hands or my feet not just the physical not the external image of the body but you can go into the body with your attention and that's, you're in nature even if you're in a present cell you can do that and even if there's no opportunity you might be in an office block in Manhattan and you look out of the window and all you have is maybe a little bit of sky okay, there's a little bit of nature there you can look at that but you have more nature than that in yourself so as you sat in your office wherever it is go within first be conscious that breathing is happening the body is breathing be conscious also of the the preciousness of the air it's such a precious substance so to acknowledge that is actually part of what sometimes is called to live in a state of gratitude now some people say what can I be grateful for

there's nothing in my life that I can be grateful for well, are you breathing?

yes well you start there if you start being grateful for the tiniest things then gradually that expands and that shift in consciousness of honoring life no matter how small it is the manifestation of life as yourself by honoring that gratitude arises and a totally different state of consciousness then brings about good things but you have to start with the good that is already there there's not enough good in my life people say I need more good life hasn't given me what I needed start with what you have and the most obvious thing to start with is I'm breathing and it's something very beautiful to feel that you are absorbing this energy that is air that then merges with your being it's an amazing thing to honor the process of breath to honor the fact that you are breathing and that is you can start with that that is becoming honoring the present moment if you are looking for the present moment which is of course all there ever is some people read it in the power of now and were surprised and they're still surprised when I say the present moment is all there ever is in your life, there's nothing, there is no past and future in your experience except when you think about it but not in your actual experience oh, well yes, it's actually true the greatest philosopher could come and he could not argue with the fact that you only ever experience the present moment, there is nothing else the mind asks well, where is the present moment? well start with your breath, that will always take you into the present moment because you're breathing now, and you're only ever taking one breath this one, all other breaths you either remember or anticipate mentally and it's actually said that the Buddha recommended this as a meditation maybe even before the Buddha, but the Buddha certainly recommended that people should be aware of their breath as a meditation he didn't say, as far as I know that that will take you into the present moment and he didn't say that will actually stop your mind too, he just said be aware of your breath and so breath awareness meditation has become a Buddhist meditation that's practiced, but the dangerous thing is with practitioners of meditation is they make it into something to be achieved through it they want to become good at it you can't become good at one breath this is just one breath so there's nature and there's the present moment here, now, here oh and I thought there was nothing to be grateful for, I'm breathing or breathing is happening and it's and then as you become aware of that, you're beginning to feel that your body is also alive on the inside to feel that there isn't there's an energy that is pervading the entire body, that's nature and it's very close, it's the closest and you can't get to a tree that close as you can to your body or anything else so that's really the closest you can ever get to nature, it's there in yourself as the physical body but when you become aware now, this is something for us for each one of us to do right now, not to do but to notice there's no doing as such because we don't have to do anything you can do, sometimes it helps to move about, to get a little bit of sense that your body is alive that can help but you can see there's the body is alive, can I feel that yes the breath is happening and there's aliveness in my feet my hands, my legs very subtle at first, but it's there and there's nature and that's already a deeper level than what you see out in nature when you look

at a tree, you can't to get deeper than the image of the tree, you have to have gone deeper within yourself so that you can sense the aliveness of the tree you cannot sense the aliveness of the tree unless you can sense the aliveness in yourself if you don't sense the aliveness in yourself, you're only approaching the tree with your mind and your mind might say, oh that's a nice tree but you're missing the depth of it you're missing the fact that there's more here than what the mind tells you there's here when the mind says there's a tree or a flower or whatever it is what you're looking at and call a tree and then believe that the word that you have attached to it actually describes its reality no, it's a label it's an abstraction that you put onto this thing that you cannot really understand it's a vitally alive, mysterious being with great depth as much depth as you because all forms all life forms are connected and come out of the one source of life so you're beginning to go to feel that when you feel the aliveness of the inner body it's not quite the deepest source yet but you're going towards the non-physical the life energy that comes from the source so connecting with yourself through breath and feeling the inner body is part of connecting with nature often people only notice nature when there's something unusual happening for example a thunderstorm, you cannot help notice that, suddenly there's a flash of lightning or you go to a place where there's a tornado happening of course then you notice nature or you go out into alpine regions, high mountains overpowering you're climbing up mountains and suddenly you hear as I remember a few years ago in Switzerland I was walking and suddenly you hear a huge like a cannon like a cannon being fired and there were chunks breaking off the glacier and of course that is such an overpowering thing it stops you and you go wow is it coming this way but most of the time nature is more subtle than that and so to notice the nature in its subtle aspect which is always there now that requires you to have a certain degree of alertness attention alertness is required in other words if you are totally immersed in the thinking mind you miss the whole thing and even sometimes I walk in the forest quite often I see people walking some are wearing noise machines as if the noise machine that they have in their head anyway were not enough they put speakers onto their ears so that they don't hear nature don't hear anything natural just hear and even those who don't have these things on their ears whatever they are these days technology changes so quickly I no longer know what they are called I can't catch up it's no longer CDs this is old fashioned it's other things now even if they don't have that often I can see two friends walking in the forest and they are talking to each other, animators, nothing wrong with talking to each other but they don't they 98% of what's around them they don't notice occasionally they say oh look at that let's talk about something more important and even people walking alone often they are not really there they are partly there but a lot of their attention is still in their thoughts and even if they are looking and saying oh this is they are exclusively there as the judgmental mind the interpreting mind not yet as presence but nature offers such a wonderful opportunity to enter the state of presence which is the state of spacious awareness of just that there is no conceptualizing thought happening just spacious aware presence the most miraculous state for human beings to be in the next stage in human evolution that's

nature offers you that opportunity more than anything that is man made because everything that is man made has been made with to a greater or lesser extent the mind has come in and transformed nature into something that still is if you trace it back everything goes back to nature even a piece of plastic cannot be made without something natural to start with which then the mind transforms and even a car everything in the car if you trace it back where it comes from of course it comes from nature originally but in the intervening time period the human mind has transformed it into something else and there's nothing wrong with that except that the man made things are not as suitable for going deeper and experiencing the state of presence than things that are not have not been made through thinking that came spontaneously out of the one consciousness out of which everything comes produced by the one life, the one underlying intelligence field everything has come out of that and there is no thinking that goes into the when nature manufactures a flower look at that it doesn't say let's have a committee meeting and draw up a blueprint and talk about what shape should it be let's put into the computer the proportions of it and work it all out it gets very complicated and they could never manufacture something like that the subtleness of it the incredible delicacy of it so yes of course this has incredible harmony and beauty but no conceptual thinking has gone into its making it's not an intelligence has created that it must have but this is not not analytical thought has not created that and this is why the flower then is more suitable for entering the state of no thought of pure presence than for example this clock because the moment I look at this clock the mind says oh it's such and such a time and it's nothing wrong with clocks I like ticking clocks but it's to be and once you are firmly rooted in presence you can look at anything and be free of thinking and you can see the beauty even in a clock or a car and say wow oh it's just but as a help nature is much more helpful because nature exists in prior to thought we could say evolutionary scale oops there we go I could have held this flower up and stopped speaking and that would have the Buddha's silent sermon 2,600 years ago people still remember it he sat there and he was going to speak and then suddenly he saw this flower and he took this flower and looked at it for how long nobody knows but it must have gone on for a long time and everybody got restless that's called the Buddha's silent sermon and then after half an hour one hour we don't know because they didn't have clocks then one of the because they were all monks at that time other people didn't have access to anything to spiritual teachings I talk about that in the New Earth at the beginning one of the monks all the other monks looked puzzled what's he trying to do and one monk suddenly started to smile and the story goes that he was the only one that understood that sermon of the Buddha the one who smiled and this smile was according to the story or the legend or the scriptures the smile was passed on from generation to generation of teacher and pupil so he became a teacher that monk and they say he passed on the smile which really means the realization to the next and the next and the next and after six or seven or whatever generations it became the origin of Zen that's how the story goes so what is it then that he smiled about well let's not conceptualize it I think you will realize it for yourself as we progress here not are we then

returning when we go into nature are we then returning to the level that trees live at or flowers or minerals or birds whatever it is are we is it an act of return to a primordial stage of being not quite we join whatever natural thing it is that we are perceiving we join it in the state of no thought but when we go there we have gone through thought already we rise above thought the flower exists below thought so and then we meet in the dimension of no thought but at a very deep level we don't we do not become the flower or the cabbage well if you had a choice you'd probably rather be a flower than a cabbage but cabbage is beautiful too we are not regressing cabbage is fine for the cabbage but not for us the cabbage is totally at ease with itself one with a source doesn't inhabit a world of problems, doesn't generate conflict, the cabbage is rooted in being so is the tree, so is the flower and even the dog well most of them and the cat except those who have lived for too long with neurotic humans they are rooted in being and this is why people love dogs and cats there's actually a deep reason, a deep meaning to that because they can sense that the dog or the cat is more deeply rooted in being is more at rest within him or herself than the human the human has gone out very far from the source into further and further differentiation everything originates from the one source of all life, the unmanifested formless, timeless one source everything then comes out of that source and humans are a product, a very differentiated product gone out a long way from the source a little bit like the prodigal son in the new testament who leaves the father's home and squanders his wealth and becomes destitute he's left the source, he's gone so far out that he becomes destitute he doesn't remember his origins anymore so the dog and even less so the flower or the tree they haven't gone out that far, so to speak from the source, there's still more of a connection with their origin and this is also why they are not fearful of death they don't think about, oh, I'm going to die, and when an animal dies, an animal is very accepting, it surrenders into that it doesn't make a problem out of living and it doesn't make a problem out of dying it doesn't live on the level of problem making, which is the level when you lose your sense of connectedness with the source and this is because you identify it with the thinking mind, then a world of problems arises, you create a world that's what you manifest then, and that's what you end up with on this planet on this beautiful planet, which is paradise you end up with layers and layers of complexity and increasing problems oh my god it's all getting so complicated, it's just survival is getting complicated very complicated so really now, when we talk about nature exists closer to the source we have gone out very far, and for us it's not a return to the original level where the animal lives or the tree lives it's a transcendence where you regain awareness of the source of being with full consciousness rather than as a natural state and you don't really know, the dog doesn't know that the dog is one with being he just is one with being the tree doesn't know if you tell the tree, are you one with being, if the tree could understand you, of course it doesn't, it doesn't have conceptual, are you one with being or no so there's a but if you look at nature everything exists it's so much so at rest within itself, it has so much integrity everything natural has such integrity integrity, the word originally means being one with yourself not having split yourself into two or three for example when you say

me and my life the tree doesn't say me and my life my difficult life the tree is life an expression of life the human says I have a hard life and the hard life that the human says he or she has is a mental construct because it has no real reality except as a movement of thought because the only real life that you have is at this moment, ever, always this is your life now I sit here, breathing, perceiving this aware presence this is life, this is your life the rest is memories or anticipation through thinking so the dog doesn't have a life, the dog is an unproblematic expression of life so is everything in nature it is life manifesting the one timeless sacred the one, deep down the one formless life becoming form as millions of life forms coming out of they say with the big bang it all started who knows before the big bang there was nothing nobody understands that because you can't understand nothing no thing no form, no time out of that void which is also the fullness of infinite potential came the forms more and more differentiated over millions and millions of years and then finally it becomes the human mind the most differentiated as far as we can see, there may be others even more mad somewhere else in the universe continuously thinking and analyzing and evaluating

[Speaker 5] (8:50:32 - 8:50:33)

and so

[Speaker 1] (8:50:33 - 9:00:16)

then the entity that has to carry that mind is completely out of touch with the source, you are not cut off from the original source, the original oneness you just don't know it's there and so that's it that's the state of being lost lost in your mind, lost in the world, split yourself in two or three, having a life that you don't like me and my life me and my story my sad story and then life is perceived no longer as a joyful expression of the underlying oneness but becomes a burden gets heavier and heavier and so this has happened to humanity the humanity is this species is at a critical stage now, there's a possibility of a shift into a deeper state or a higher state if you want to call it that, of transcending conceptual thinking going beyond you can still think but no longer trapped in thinking, this is where humanity has to go and as you transcend conceptual thinking you regain what was lost eons, eons ago you regain your sense of connectedness with being you feel deep down you're connected with something vast and it's not different from who you are just when we put it into language it sounds as if that was something different from who you are you're connected with being with a sense of simple beingness being comes from the word to be the most primordial thing and everything in nature is an expression of that underlying beingness and including the physical body this body this body all that we perceive in this world is existence it exists this body exists this body exists underlying existence is being being is the formless timeless dimension within yourself, it's very much like the black hole at the center of the galaxy when I was writing The Power of Now I wrote I don't know why I wrote that, it just came to me one day I wrote there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy and the editor saw it and said

you can't say that because you don't how can you know that, the people are going to argue with that, so it was taken out and some years later I read an article by a scientist and it said now scientists believe that there is a black hole at the center of every galaxy and so why did I know that?

I knew that because I could feel the black hole inside myself this spacious formless one life, the origin that's and so and I know that the human being is a microcosm you can understand the whole universe by understanding yourself you are just a microscopic version of that so that's the we are regaining by no longer being lost in the conceptualizing mind we regain something that was lost a long, long time ago, very much like the prodigal son in the New Testament your origin not your origin you can't say, it's not really your origin in time, it's not saying, ok my origin was six billion years ago, that's where I started when the big bang happened, that was the beginning of me that's true of course that was the beginning but it's not so much that the origin is in the distant past or not even in the near past the origin is timeless the origin of your being it is still there this primordial nothingness before the big bang is still in you now nature can help you rediscover that if you approach it not with the conceptualizing mind but you approach nature and perceive nature in a state of alert attention spaciousness and that's a wonderful wonderful first we could call it a practice but then it's no longer a practice it becomes a natural way of being first in nature and then even in the man made world, but we need to first of all be able to, we are going into it now do it in the forest or on the beach or in the field wherever it is before you can be in that state, in the shopping mall where everything it's not so you can't really find being that easily you have to be rooted very deeply in yourself to find being in the shopping mall because everything is surface phenomena buy me, do this do this, eat a hamburger look here, look here and then after 20 minutes in the shopping mall you are totally exhausted because all the energy is flowing out of your eyes into phenomena and music is in the background not the most profound music and yet you could be walking in the forest for three hours and not feel exhausted, in fact feel invigorated isn't that strange? So the shopping mall takes it out of you and the forest or whatever the beach or the desert puts it back there is something there very very different and but not for everybody there needs to be the openness and the alertness so that all the seemingly insignificant things in nature you are alert to that for example you're looking at you're walking a tree a slight movement of leaves in the breeze perhaps a sound associated with it your senses are alert not strained there is no tension you don't go no, just alert and you live in that alertness of course there is no thought anymore because if you were thinking you would not be alert thought is not alert it's a lower state alertness is a higher state than thought higher consciousness than thought but good thoughts which means creative thoughts original thoughts original insights can only come out of the alertness you need to have the alertness and then sometimes thought becomes fruitful and original and creative out of that but if you never touch the alertness then thought is repetitive old records CDs not records anymore and not CDs anymore old iPods or whatever so nature then you have to approach nature with

that alertness attentiveness like a little child as if you had come there for the first time into that place let's say maybe you drive somewhere or maybe it's close to where you live you get out of the car out of your door for most people even wherever you live there will be something natural when you step out of your house even if you live downtown there may be a little tree somewhere not acknowledged by most people